Culture and Subculture

- A Study of the Mahāmudrā Teachings of Sgam po pa

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Contents

Preface

This paper deals with the Mahāmudrā[1] (Tib. phyag rgya chen po) doctrine of the Tibetan Buddhist master dwags po lha rje bsod nams rin chen, a.k.a. sgam po pa[2] (1079-1153). Gampopa has since long been familiar to Western readers through his extensive introduction to conventional Mahāyāna[3] Buddhism, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. This literary work is, however, only an element in the role Gampopa played in the religious development of Tibetan Buddhism in the twelfth century. At least as important is his conception of a new approach to Mahāmudrā practice, which so far has been largely ignored by Western scholarship. Western scholars have in the 1990's just begun to touch upon this, but a comprehensive presentation and analysis of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine has not yet been produced. This paper will call this to task and attempt to reach a thorough understanding of this subject.

In 1995 through 1997 I worked occasionally as a Tibetan-English interpreter for the bka' brgyud master Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche in Hong Kong. The subject of his lectures was a complete reading of one of the most systematic texts on Mahāmudrā, the *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i sgom rim gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad zla ba'i 'od zer* written in 1565 or 1577 by sgam po bkra shis rnam rgyal. Through this exchange with one of the living masters of the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā lineage, I became fascinated with this doctrine, and I conceived the wish to research its place in Tibetan Buddhism. This interest brought me back to its roots, the teachings of Gampopa. As I discovered how little is actually written on his Mahāmudrā doctrine, I decided to make this the subject for my graduation research paper at Copenhagen University.

Mahāmudrā originates with the tantric teachings of Indian Buddhism, as it is the name for the practices and experiences associated with the fourth initiation of Anuttarayoga Tantra. Gampopa separated Mahāmudrā from its tantric setting and presented it in the context of conventional Mahāyāna teachings. Mahāmudrā was thus no longer reserved for the initiated practitioners of the secret Tantras with their yoga techniques, but became generally accessible to followers of Mahāyāna, particularly to monks wishing to practice the Tantras without violating their vows of celibacy. With Gampopa's conception of this approach to Mahāmudrā,

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[1] I have here chosen to use the Sanskrit designation, Mahāmudrā, since this term is more commonly used in the West.

[2] Henceforth written Gampopa for the sake of convenience.

[3] I have used the expression 'conventional Mahāyāna' (Tib. theg chen thun mong pa) throughout this paper to signify the Sūtra teachings or Pāramitāyāna, to distinguish these teachings from tantric Buddhism, which by the Tibetan tradition also is classified as belonging to the Mahāyāna (Tib. theg chen thun mong ma yin pa).

a distinct tradition within Tibetan Buddhism evolved, which became known as bka' brgyud. A study of this doctrine thus reaches back to the formative years of Tibetan culture.

I will here try to answer three questions. What is the Mahāmudrā doctrine of Gampopa? What was its novelty? And what led Gampopa to develop this doctrine?

To answer these questions, it is first of all necessary to relate to the primary sources for Gampopa's teachings, which are the thirty-eight texts contained in *The Collected Works of Gampopa* (Tib. *dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum*) [4]. Western scholarship has not yet provided a comprehensive presentation of these literary works, and my paper therefore sets out in chapter one with giving a an outline of these texts.

Once the data for my research have thus been presented, chapter two focuses on giving a concrete presentation of the Mahāmudrā teachings of Gampopa based on these primary sources. In the writings of Western Tibetologists, one often finds a tremendous emphasis on biographical studies but little emphasis on discussing the actual writings of the Tibetan authors concerned. Such literary criticism is called historicism, which was a big hit quite long ago, namely during the Romanticism of the nineteenth century. It is surely due to the lack of a critically established cultural and political history of Tibet that this approach has been so popular with scholars of Tibetology. Historicism has, however, one significant flaw: it tends to overlook the import of what the Tibetan authors actually wrote while it attempts to interpret their writings solely through biographical circumstance. To guess an author's intention through analyzing his life is to add something external to the text, which thereby conceals its meaning and limits our understanding. This was pointed out during the 1940s and '50s by the followers of American New Criticism, such as John Crowe Ransom, R. P. Blackmur, W. K. Wimsatt, Monroe C. Beardsley, and Cleanth Brooks[5]. They called such evaluation of a text through biographical circumstance 'the intentional fallacy'.

To gain a more objective understanding of a literary work, they suggested that one should rely on internal evidence instead of external. This means that one should interpret the text through looking at the text itself rather than using biographical circumstance. For my presentation I have therefore relied mainly on quotations from the texts that I analyze, which gives a selective but unfiltered presentation.

Such presentation provides a picture of how these texts express Mahāmudrā, but it does not necessarily make us understand the way in which Gampopa and his followers read the very same texts. The reason is that although a quotation from a text is objective as such, the *reading* of a quotation can never be objective. The American literary critic Stanley Fish said

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[4] *Dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum* is throughout this paper referred to simply as *bka' 'bum*. A list of this collection is found in Appendix A. A number of these texts have been published in a recent anthology of Mahāmudrā texts entitled *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod*. This anthology is here referred to as *mdzod*. Bibliographical references to *mdzod* can also be found in Appendix A.

[5] Cf. Adams, 1992, pp. 865-896 and pp. 944-968.

that the way we interpret writing is defined by the context in which we see it[6]. The context in which *we* read these textual excerpts today is so different from the context in which *Tibetans* read them during the twelfth century. Not only is our purpose different from the followers of Gampopa, as they read the texts with a religious purpose while we read the texts with a scientific purpose, but indeed the entire historical setting is different. This is, in fact, the very nature of our enterprise: orientalism – *our* perception of Asian culture. It is therefore important to keep in mind that any reading or presentation of the writings of Gampopa will always be a presentation belonging to our culture, which can never interpret how the texts were read by another culture in another age. Nevertheless, a presentation of Mahāmudrā based centrally on quotations from the direct textual sources is the closest we can come to objectivity.

To make the novelty of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā teaching stand out more clearly, I introduce in chapter three a criticism of his doctrine written from a more orthodox Tantra point of view. This criticism was given by sa skya paṇḍita (1182-1253) in his *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos*. By thus comparing Gampopa's Mahāmudrā with its criticism, the difference between Gampopa's Mahāmudrā and the conventional use of Mahāmudrā in Tantrism becomes clear.

In chapter four we move on to exploring what could have led Gampopa to conceive his approach to Mahāmudrā. This is an investigation into the circumstances under which it arose. Particularly, it is an analysis of the relationship to tantric practice found within the early bka' gdams pa tradition to which Gampopa and most of his students belonged.

This paper is thus a journey through the formative years of Tibetan Buddhism. Setting off from the writings of Gampopa and his students, we touch upon classical tantric practice represented by the politically upcoming sa skya tradition and its conflict with monasticism expressed by the edifying bka' gdams pa tradition. Within these conflicting trends of monasticism and Tantrism, a new school evolved whose main teaching was a synthesis of it all: the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā tradition of Gampopa.

At last, a few practical points. I have used standard Wylie transliteration for rendering the Tibetan. I regret the inconvenience for any non-Tibetologist readers, since Tibetan is full of silent letters. An advice I can give to such readers to get at least a bit around the problem: when a word starts with an impossible combination of consonants, simply ignore the first or the first two consonants, whereby the word (hopefully) seems readable to you. A final 's' in a word is also not pronounced.

For Sanskrit words I have used standard diacritical Sanskrit transliteration. This last principle I have also applied to Sanskrit words that had been transliterated into Tibetan characters. I have decided not to use any capital letters in transliterated Tibetan names and

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[6] Cf. Stanley Fish, 1978, in Adams, 1992, p. 1199-1209.

titles except after a full stop, because capital letters are foreign to the Wylie transcription system and do not make much sense in it.

As for bibliographical references, I have for Western works only provided author and year of publication in the notes, since it is sufficient for finding the complete reference in the bibliography at the end of the paper. It would have been elegant to use the same system for the Tibetan sources, but since we often lack important bibliographical data with Tibetan texts, such as the year of publication, I have had to use more elaborate references with these. All titles are written in Italics.

Abbreviations

I have in a few cases used abbreviated titles for Tibetan works and shorthand forms for the Tibetan personal names. The following abbreviations are used:

- *bka' 'bum = dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum*
- *mdzod = nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod*
- *deb sngon = deb ther sngon po*
- *dwags po thar rgyan = dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*
- Gampopa = sgam po pa
- Sapaṇ = sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan

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"If we remember the immediate consequences of the restless and inquisitive spirit of science, it can come as no surprise to us that it destroyed myth and, by the same token, displaced poetry from its native soil and rendered it homeless."

Friedrich Nietzsche, 1872, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music.*

Chapter 1: The Works of Gampopa

1.1. The Life of Gampopa[7]

Gampopa was born in gnyal in Central Tibet (Tib. dbus) in 1079[8]. He was the second of three brothers. As a young man he married and was educated as a physician. After a few years of marriage his wife died, which triggered a spiritual search in Gampopa.

Thus, in 1104, at the age of twenty-five, Gampopa joined the bka' gdams pa order, one of the most popular religious orders of his day. The bka' gdams pas were known for stressing monkhood and the conventional Mahāyāna teachings, although they also taught some teachings belonging to tantric Buddhism. Gampopa became a monk and received the monastic name bsod nams rin chen. Next, he studied in Central Tibet for five years with a number of renowned bka' gdams pa masters. His teachers were dge bshes mar yul blo ldan shes rab, dge bshes zangs dkar ba, dge bshes snyug rum, dge bshes lcags ri ba, and dge bshes rgya yon bdag. From them he received teachings on the father and mother Tantras, yoga, the bde mchog practice, Vinaya, bodhicitta, the protector gri khug ma, and all the various teachings of Atīśa. From the outset, Gampopa had many deep meditation experiences, and he was able to remain in meditation for two consecutive weeks. Later, when he studied the lam rim teachings of Atīśa and practiced its meditations, his previous meditation experiences of bliss and clarity decreased, and he instead started to feel a stronger sense of weariness with saṃsāra and the wish to renounce it. During this time, he had many special dreams, which are mentioned in the Daśabhūmikasūtra as signs of having accomplished the bhūmis in one's former lives.

In general, the bka' gdams pas did not recommend practice of the more advanced stages of Buddhist Tantra for monks. Nevertheless, Gampopa decided to go to gung thang in South-Western Tibet (mang yul) to meet the tantric master mi la ras pa, who did not belong to the bka' gdams pa sect. They met in 1109, and Gampopa stayed with him for the following eleven months to learn meditation, in particular the tantric practice of gtum mo. In 1110, Gampopa left mi la ras pa again and briefly visited his former bka' gdams pa teachers in Central Tibet, who reacted very positively with respect to the meditation experiences Gampopa had attained while training under mi la ras pa. From 1112-1120 Gampopa practiced meditation in solitude at 'ol kha and 'o de gung rgyal. During this time Gampopa is said to have accomplished the full result of his meditative efforts, i.e. enlightenment, which in tantric terms is called the realization of Mahāmudrā.

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[7] The biographical data is based on the Gampopa-biography by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub (*bka' 'bum*, text 3, vol. 1, pp. 43-303). Some of the dates are taken from *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, pp. 3217-3222.

[8] All Tibetan and Western sources – except one – agree on the dates given here. The odd source is S. C. Das' article from 1889, where eight out of the nine Gampopa dates mentioned in the article are given as one year earlier. I think we may safely conclude that the dates given by Das are wrong. Cf. Das, 1889.

In 1121 Gampopa settled at the mountain of sgam po in dwags po, where he erected a small temple. He stayed there for the rest of his life spending his time teaching Buddhism. Ras sgom ras pa, another student of mi la ras pa, first came to stay with him. Then followed dge shes rgyal ba khyung tshang can, dge shes gnyan nag, snyags dmar po and more, until a large number of students had gathered around him. Most of his students were bka' gdams pa monks.

In general, Gampopa emphasized basic motivational teachings and meditation practice. He seems to have been a very capable teacher, who was not afraid of challenging his students. For example, khams pa dbu se[9] became a student of Gampopa in 1139. After several years of meditation practice under his guidance, he came to see Gampopa to present his experience. To this Gampopa responded: "Your realization is wrong! I had great hopes in you. You should continue your meditation." Khams pa dbu se then continued his meditation retreat for another six months, but his realization did not change at all during this time. He then again went to see Gampopa, who this time put his hand on his head and responded: "Son, you have already severed the bond to saṃsāra."[10]

Another delightful example is the story of phag mo gru pa, who in 1151 came to see Gampopa to present his meditation experience. He had earlier studied and practiced under many other teachers, and the sa skya master sa chen kun dga' snying po had earlier confirmed his experience to be the genuine realization of the first bhūmi. When phag mo gru pa told this to Gampopa, he answered: "Ah, did he respect you that much?" To this phag mo gru pa said: "Yes, he did honor me." Gampopa then held in his hand a ball of barley-dough, of which he had already eaten half, and said: "I swear that this is much better than the results of yours." Phag mo gru pa then became very despondent, but Gampopa told him to take a walk and come back to see him later. As phag mo gru pa went for a walk all his previous concepts were shattered and he achieved a genuine realization[11]. These two students, khams pa dbu se and phag mo gru pa, later became the main lineage-holders of Gampopa.

Gampopa died in 1153. The various bka' brgyud lineages came into being through his students. A few of his main students were his nephew dwags po sgom tshul (1116-1169), khams pa dbu se (1110-1193), phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan (1110-1170), rnal 'byor chos g.yung (1100-1177), grol sgom chos g.yung (1103-1199), and 'ba' rom pa dar ma dbang phyug.

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[9] A.k.a. karma pa dus gsum mkhyen pa. As the early sources usually refer to him as khams pa dbu se, I have decided to retain this name here.

[10] Cf. *deb sngon*, p. 415, and Roerich, 1949, p. 477.

[11] Cf. *deb sngon*, p. 486, and Roerich, 1949, pp. 558-559.

1.2. Biographical Sources for Gampopa

The Western surveys of Tibetan cultural history make three observations with regard to Gampopa[12]. The first observation is that he authored an important introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism entitled *dwags po thar rgyan*[13]. The second is that he is the origin of the various bka' brgyud traditions within the Tibetan Buddhism. The third is that he taught a new kind of Mahāmudrā, which blended tantric teachings with bka' gdams pa-style conventional Mahāyāna teachings. When one looks at the references found in these books, it becomes clear that these observations have been based on two sources. The first source is the above-mentioned text by Gampopa, the *dwags po thar rgyan*, which has been available since 1959 in English translation[14]. The second source is a major Tibetan survey of the formative period of Tibetan Buddhism, namely the *deb sngon*[15] from 1478 by 'gos lotsa ba gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481). This text has been available since 1949 in English translation[16].

The *dwags po thar rgyan* is a primary source, which will be treated later in section 1.10. *Deb sngon*, on the other hand, is a secondary source, which itself is based on a number of other sources. In this text one finds a biography of Gampopa covering eleven pages[17]. Similar Gampopa biographies are to be found in later Tibetan historical surveys, e.g. *mkhas pa'i dga' ston*[18] from 1564 written by dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (1504-1566)[19].

The most detailed Tibetan Gampopa-biography is found in the collected works of Gampopa[20], which consists of 260 pages. It was written in 1520 by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub[21] (1488-1532). It was probably composed in connection with the publication of the collected works of Gampopa, which was also done by sgam po bsod nam lhun grub. This biography was thus written 42 years after *deb sngon*. It does not state *deb sngon* as one of its sources, but the two texts nevertheless correspond very well to each other, and sometimes

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[12] Cf. Tucci, 1980, p. 36; Stein, 1972, p. 74; Snellgrove, 1987, pp. 492-497; Samuel, 1993, pp. 478-480; Powers, 1995, pp. 349-352.

[13] Abbreviated title. The full title is *dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*, bka' 'bum, text 38.

[14] Guenther, 1959.

[15] Abbr. title of *deb ther sngon po*. In some sources the original title is given as *bod kyi yul du chos dang chos smra ba ji ltar byung ba'i rim pa deb ther sngon po*.

[16] Roerich, 1949.

[17] *Deb sngon*, pp. 393-402, and Roerich, 1949, pp. 451-462.

[18] Abbreviated title. The full title is *dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston*.

[19] *mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, pp.789-800

[20] *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan sgam po pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che khyab snyan pa'i ba dan thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyi mchog,* bka' 'bum, text 3.

[21] His full name as stated in *bka' 'bum* is spyan snga chos rje bsod nams lhun grub zla 'od rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po. The short form of his name and his dates are according to *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 3252 and p. 3256.

even use the same phrases. It is therefore quite possible that they are based on the same source, which is probably an earlier Gampopa-biography written by the second zhwa dmar pa, mka' spyod dbang po (1350-1405). The colophon of sgam po bsod nams lhun grub's text states its sources as follows:

> These [stories] have been compiled through combining three [versions of his] life-story of varying length spoken by the master [Gampopa] himself, a compilation of these made by his four closest students, valet and others, the notes taken by [his] students, as well as [the text] known as *the great biography* by the master mkha' spyod dbang po.[22]

From this statement we learn that there existed a number of early biographies as well as a long biography by the second zhwa dmar pa, mka' spyod dbang po (1350-1405), which is here just referred to as *rnam thar chen mo*. The three biographies 'spoken' by Gampopa are not to be found in his collected works, so it may very well be that the word spoken should be understood literally here. The collected works of Gampopa contains only one early text, which gives some biographical material on Gampopa. This is the *dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*[23], where Gampopa tells about his youth, his bka' gdams pa teachers, his meeting with mi la ras pa, and his meditation experiences to his student khams pa dbu se. Although this text is not written by Gampopa himself, it is authored by people who knew Gampopa personally and practiced under him. It is therefore the earliest possible biographical source. The Gampopa biography by mkha' spyod dbang po has unfortunately not been available to me. It seems to be quite rare today, but should still exist in the library of Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim[24].

A quite detailed description of Gampopa's meeting with mi la ras pa exists in English in *The Rain of Wisdom*[25], which is a translation of the Tibetan text *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*[26]. The text is a compilation of stories and songs by various bka' brgyud masters first initiated by the eighth karma pa, mi bskyod rdo rje, around 1542. It has since been expanded several times. The two sections containing material on Gampopa are found in the dpal spungs block-print edition, which was published by the eighth si tu pa, bstan pa'i nyin byed (1700-1774)[27]. The

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[22] *Bka' 'bum*, text 3, pp. 301-302: 'di dag ni rje nyid kyis gsungs pa'i rnam thar rgyas bsdus gsum dang/ /nye gnas chos bzhi dang/ bran kha rin po che la sogs pa rnams kyis phyogs cig tu sgrigs pa dang/ 'dul 'dzin gyis zin bris su mdzad pa rnams dang/ rje mkha' spyod dbang pos mdzad pa'i rnam thar chen mor grags pa rnams gung sgrigs te/.

[23] *Bka' 'bum*, text 10. The biographical material is found in *mdzod*, pp. 130-148.

[24] Interview with Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel, November 1997.

[25] Trungpa, 1980

[26] *Bka' brgyud mgur mtsho* is an abbreviated name. Its title in full is *mchog gi dngos grub mngon du byed pa'i myur lam bka' brgyud bla ma rnams kyi rdo rje'i mgur dbyangs ye shes char 'bebs rang grol lhun grub bde chen rab 'bar nges don rgya mtsho'i snying po.*

[27] The information on the editions of *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho* is taken from Trungpa, 1980, pp. 303-306.

first section is a narrative covering 32 pages about how Gampopa came to meet his teacher mi la ras pa and the eleven months they spent together[28]. It corresponds almost word by word with the above mentioned biography by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub. It therefore must be based on this biography or it could perhaps be based on the earlier biography written by mkha' spyod dbang po. The narrative ends with a short story of how Gampopa managed to stop having dreams and thereby transformed his sleep into a spiritual state[29]. This story is, however, not to be found in any other source. The second section in *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho* dealing with Gampopa is a story entitled *rje sgam po pa dang khams pa mi gsum gyi zhu lan sho mo yar shog gi mgur*[30]. The authenticity of this story is, however, very questionable, which will be shown later (section 4.3).

One also finds summaries of Gampopa's life story in most of the Western translations of *dwags po thar rgyan*[31], where the biographical data are based on *deb sngon*. The brief biography found in the German translation by Sönam Lhündrub contains small discrepancies on almost every point when compared to the Tibetan biography by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub (so much for having the same name).

1.3. The Collected Works of Gampopa

Having now dealt briefly with the biographical material on Gampopa, we shall turn to the primary sources for study of Gampopa, namely the works written or taught by Gampopa himself. A collection of thirty-eight Gampopa-texts was published around 1520[32] by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub[33] (1488-1532) under the title of *dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum*[34]. In this chapter I will give an outline of these texts, and at the end of this paper (Appendix A) there is an overview of the collection with bibliographical references.

Sgam po bsod nams lhun grub does not mention in what form the texts of *bka' 'bum* existed prior to his compilation of them. However, when one looks at the colophons of the individual texts, it becomes clear that the majority of the texts were not written by Gampopa himself but rather by his students or their followers. Most of the texts are therefore not primary sources but only secondary sources. It is, however, important to keep in mind that the Tibetans

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[28] *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*, pp. 101a-116b, and Trungpa, 1980, pp. 217-242.

[29] *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*, pp. 116a-116b, and Trungpa, 1980, pp. 241-242.

[30] In the English translation it is entitled *The Three Men from Kham. Bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*, pp. 134a-138b, and Trungpa, 1980, pp. 275-282.

[31] Cf. Guenther, 1959, Guenther, 1989, and Lhündrub, 1996.

[32] The colophon of *bka' 'bum* does not mention when it was published, but the Gampopa biography by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub was according to its colophon written in 1520, and we may safely assume that he wrote this biography in connection with compiling *bka' 'bum*.

[33] This is stated clearly in the colophon of the collection.

[34] Referred to throughout this paper merely as *bka' 'bum*.

consider all of these texts to be primary sources that all reflect the exact words spoken by Gampopa, and they are therefore quoted with the authority of Gampopa in the later Tibetan literary works.

The *bka' 'bum* collection was carved onto wood blocks and kept at the dwags lha sgam po monastery, which was the monastery founded by Gampopa himself in 1121. This redaction was later published in sde dge. The sde dge redaction was published in two volumes (vol. e-wam). Reprints of the original block-prints are quite rare today. A copy of the sde dge redaction exists in Paris Musée Guimet (Fonds Migot)[35]. The recently published anthology of Mahāmudrā works entitled *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod*[36] contains twenty-six of the thirty-eight works mentioned in *bka' 'bum*[37]. These texts – except for the four zhus lan texts[38] – are reprints of an original block-print (probably the sde dge redaction), which is preserved at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, India[39].

Another recent publication is the *rtsibs ri par ma* collection[40], which contains seven Gampopa-texts[41]. This is a collection of meditation instructions of the bka' brgyud and rnying ma traditions carved onto wood blocks at la stod rtsibs ri in 1934-1958.

Gampopa's literary works have also recently been published three times in different editions[42]. The first edition was published in 1974 and entitled *Selected Writings of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen (Dwags-po Lha-rje) with the biography written by his descendant Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-lhun-grub*. This edition is a handwritten dbu-can manuscript equivalent to vol. E, part ka-tsha, of the sde dge redaction. The second edition was published the following year, 1975, and is entitled *Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen*. This is a handwritten dbu can manuscript copy of a block print from a Western Tibetan redaction (gung thang?). This publication contains thirty-six of the thirty-eight Gampopa-texts[43]. The third edition, published in 1982, is also entitled *Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen*. This is a handwritten dbu can manuscript copy of

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[35] Reference numbers TO541 and TO542. Sections e-ga and e-pha are missing from volume one. Volume two seems to be complete and ends with *dwags po thar rgyan*. I am indebted to Gene E. Smith for this information (email, April 1998).

[36] Referred to throughout this paper merely as *mdzod*.

[37] See Appendix A for details.

[38] These four texts are reprints of the *rtsibs ri par ma* collection (see below).

[39] According to Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel. Interview, November 1997.

[40] Abbreviated title. The full title is *dkar rnying skyes chen du ma'i phyag rdzogs kyi gdams ngag gnad bsdus nyer mkho rin po che'i gter mdzod rtsibs ri'i par ma*.

[41] See Appendix A for details.

[42] I am indebted to Gene E. Smith for the details on these three publications. Mr. Smith was involved with these publications. Email, April 1998.

[43] The last page of *bka' 'bum,* text 36, is missing as well as the two *bka' 'bum* texts 37-38.

the dwags lha sgam po redaction. It contains many spelling mistakes and only includes twenty-eight of the thirty-eight Gampopa texts[44].

For writing this paper, the Gampopa texts found in *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod*, *rtsibs ri par ma* and the 1982 edition of the *Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen* have been available to me. Appendix A gives bibliographical references to these three editions. It should be noted that the abbreviated title *bka' 'bum* refers to the 1982 edition op. cit. and how the thirty-eight texts are listed therein[45]. Thus, there are two Gampopa texts that have not been available to me, namely *mar pa'i tshigs bcad brgyad ma'i 'grel gtam*[46] and *bstan bcos lung gi nyi 'od*[47]. In the following sections of this chapter I will give a survey of the works of Gampopa. The divisions I have used between different groups of texts are my own.

1.4. Biographies

Bka' 'bum begins with three biographical texts (Tib. rnam thar). The first two may have been spoken or written by Gampopa himself, while the third is the Gampopa biography written by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub in 1520, which was presented above.

Rje sgam po pas mdzad pa'i te lo nā ro'i rnam thar[48] consists of 21 pages. The text has no colophon and thus only the title tells us that Gampopa wrote it. On the one hand, Gampopa often stressed the importance of that the Buddhist teacher is part of an authentic transmission lineage, which makes it seem possible that Gampopa authored this text as it concerns teachers belonging to Gampopa's own lineage. On the other hand, he only referred to himself by his monastic name, bsod nams rin chen, in the colophons of his two major literary works, viz. *dwags po thar rgyan*[49] and *zhal gdams lam mchog rin chen phreng ba*[50], which is not the case here with this biography. It is therefore not clear whether Gampopa authored this text or not. This biography must anyway be counted among the earliest Tilopa/Nāropa-biographies.

The text starts by making a distinction between two Buddhist approaches. The one approach is to create the cause for enlightenment (Tib. rgyu lam du 'khyer ba), which is the Pāramitāyāna transmitted by Atīśa (Tib. jo bo rje lha cig). The other approach is to consider

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[44] *Bka' 'bum,* text 9-12, 14, 20, and 35-38 are missing. See Appendix A for details.

[45] One should particularly be aware of this in reference to an important book by David Jackson, *Enlightenment by a Single Means* (Jackson, 1994), which gives bibliographical reference to the 1975-edition of the *Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen*. As this edition has not been available to me, I have unfortunately not been able to make cross-references when discussing Mr. Jackson's work.

[46] *Bka' 'bum,* text 35.

[47] *Bka' 'bum,* text 37.

[48] *Bka' 'bum*, text 1.

[49] *Bka' 'bum*, text 38.

[50] *Bka' 'bum*, text 36.

the qualities of enlightenment to be immanent in all beings (Tib. ‘bras bu lam du ‘khyer ba), which is the Vajrayāna transmitted by Nāropa. A few details are given about Tilopa, but these mostly belong to the fantastic. Nāropa is mentioned as the student of Tilopa. A long description of how they met and the hardships Nāropa underwent follows. It is stated that Nāropa became enlightened and then proceeded to Nalanda, where he used magical powers to protect the place against non-Buddhists. Finally, there are a few stories about how Nāropa benefitted different people through magic and teachings.

The next biography is called *rje mar pa dang rje btsun mi la'i rnam thar*[51] and consists of 20 pages. No author is mentioned in this text, but given that it is included among the literary works of Gampopa, it must be considered one of the earliest biographies of mar pa and mi la ras pa. First the story of mar pa is given. It is told how he came to study with ‘brog mi lotsa ba and thereafter went to Nepal and India to receive teachings. Then mar pa came back to Tibet and taught various students. Different short stories of special events in the life of mar pa are told. Finally, there are a few notes on his main student, bla ma rngog. Then follows the story of mi la ras pa. It is told briefly how he learned magic. Then he met a rdzogs chen teacher, after which he came to see mar pa. He served mar pa for five years and bla ma rngog for one year before he received teachings. After doing some meditation retreat, he went to visit his family home only to find that it lay in ruins. He then started prolonged meditation retreats in the wilderness of the mountains. Since he had nothing else to eat but weeds, his skin acquired a bluish hue. Different stories about his austerities are then told. Different stories about the magical powers of mi la ras pa after the completion of his practice follow.

The third text is the Gampopa-biography written by sgam po bsod nams lhun grub in 1520. It is entitled *chos kyi rje dpal ldan sgam po pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che khyab snyan pa'i ba dan thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyi mchog*[52] and consists of 260 pages. This text was presented above (cf. section 1.1-1.2).

1.5. Teaching Collections

There are five teaching collections (Tib. tshogs chos) in the *bka' ‘bum*: *tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs, tshogs chos legs mdzes ma, tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs, tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba* and *tshogs chos chen mo*[53].

Gampopa did not write these texts, but they appear to be notes taken by students based on Gampopa's lectures. The actual author is stated in the colophon of each work. Each text consists of a number of lectures, and one can distinguish where each new lecture begins by certain standard phrases being inserted into the text at the beginning of each lecture, e.g. “again, from the Dharma-master Gampopa” (Tib. “yang chos rje sgam po pa'i zhal nas . . .”).

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[51] *Bka' ‘bum*, text 2.

[52] *Bka' ‘bum*, text 3.

A teaching collection is thus a cycle of teachings, which in each case is a complete cycle having a particular starting point and end. These texts are very interesting in that they bring some understanding of how Gampopa arranged the topics of his lectures – given that one can trust the accuracy of the notes reflecting what Gampopa actually said. The way in which conventional Mahāyāna topics here are blended with tantric and/or Mahāmudrā teachings is particularly interesting. These texts are therefore especially important when exploring the way in which Gampopa "mixed the streams of the bka' gdams pa and Mahāmudrā traditions"[54].

These teachings typically set out with a series of motivational talks, covering topics such as the precious human life, impermanence, the value of kindness and compassion, etc. In the middle of the cycles, they mostly speak about the Vajrayāna and the Mahāmudrā approach. They usually end again by stressing impermanence and the like to urge the importance of immediately practicing the teachings that were given. These teachings do not contain concrete meditation instructions but rather seem to be general lectures intended for a larger audience.

Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs[55], 38 pages, consists of nine sections compiled by sho sgom byang chub ye shes (dates unknown). This text is the shortest of the five teaching collections, and its structure is very clear. It begins with three lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, followed by three lectures on zhi gnas/lhag mthong meditation and the ensuing experiences of bliss, clarity and no-thought (Tib. bde ba, gsal ba, mi rtog pa). In the seventh lecture the subject of Mahāmudrā is introduced[56]. The eighth lecture explains the different kinds of commitments (Tib. sdom gsum)[57], i.e. the commitments of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow, and the Mantrayāna commitments, after which the last lecture returns to the topic of Mahāmudrā, where the innate (Tib. lhan skyes) is explained. This teaching cycle thus builds up with conventional Mahāyāna teachings before it moves into explaining Mahāmudrā.

Mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma[58], 145 pages, is a series of seventeen lectures. The colophon[59] states that bsgom pa legs mdzes took these notes without adding or changing what Gampopa had said. This cycle sets out with two lectures on Mantrayāna, where particularly the role of the teacher and his blessing is explained. After nine lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, lecture twelve to fourteen are pure Mahāmudrā explanations. Next come five lectures, where the Mahāmudrā teachings are substantiated with quotations from various Mahāyāna texts. Finally, the whole cycle is completed with a lecture

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[53] *Bka' 'bum*, text 4-8.

[54] *Deb sngon*, p. 400, Roerich, 1949, p. 460.

[55] *Bka' 'bum*, text 4.

[56] Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine will be introduced in chapter 2.

[57] Jan-Ulrich Sobisch has written an article on this subject in which he gives a synopsis of Gampopa's stance on the three vows. Cf. Sobisch, 1997, pp. 896-897.

[58] *Bka' 'bum*, text 5.

[59] *Bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 487.

emphasizing bodhicitta. In the same lecture one also finds a detailed instruction in guru-yoga (Tib. bla ma'i rnal 'byor), which is explained to be a technique for entering meditation on the nature of the mind. This teaching cycle thus mainly teaches a blend of conventional Mahāyāna topics and Mahāmudrā, whereby it becomes clear how these go together.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs[60], 88 pages, is a compilation of thirty lectures made by sho bsgom byang chub ye shes. This teaching cycle puts a much stronger emphasis on Vajrayāna teachings and it also contains the most material on Mahāmudrā among these five teaching cycles. The first six lectures introduce the Vajrayāna, which is followed by three lectures on conventional Mahāyāna. Lecture ten and eleven then return to the topic of Vajrayāna and explain how to go beyond its limitations. The following eight lectures give pure Mahāmudrā teachings, after which there are six lectures, which integrate Mahāmudrā, Vajrayāna, and conventional Mahāyāna teachings. The cycle then returns to conventional Mahāyāna teachings in the next three lectures, and the whole thing finishes with a lecture giving a concluding summary.

Tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba[61], 55 pages, is a series of twenty teachings written down by Gampopa's nephew and close student, dwags po bsgom tshul (1116-1169). He stayed with Gampopa for twenty-six years and took on the responsibility for Gampopa's monastery in dwags lha sgam po in 1151, two years before Gampopa died. This teaching collection sets out with six lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, which are followed by a single lecture on Mahāmudrā. Again, there are another six lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, after which there come three lectures on Vajrayāna and a bit of Mahāmudrā. At the end come three more lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, which are rounded off with a single lecture on Mahāmudrā. This teaching cycle has the strongest emphasis on conventional Mahāyāna among the five teaching collections.

Rje dwags po rin po che'i tshogs chos chen mo[62], 64 pages, is a collection of eighteen lectures compiled by dge slong shes rab gzhon nu. This teaching cycle is a much later compilation, which was probably first written in the 13th century, at least a hundred years after Gampopa's demise, since the author mentions karma pakshi (1204-1283) in the introduction to the text[63]. The text starts with two lectures about the importance of faith, and goes on with four lectures on Mahāmudrā. Next comes one lecture on Vajrayāna and two lectures on how to practice and rely on the teacher. Again, the text returns to Mahāmudrā in the four following lectures, which is followed by a lecture on bodhicitta. Then there is a lecture on meditation experience, and the entirety then ends with three lectures on conventional Mahāyāna, how to

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[60] *Bka' 'bum*, text 6.

[61] *Bka' 'bum*, text 7.

[62] *Bka' 'bum*, text 8.

[63] *Bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 58-60.

practice in retreat, etc. This teaching cycle only contains little material on conventional Mahāyāna and instead puts its main emphasis on meditation practice and Mahāmudrā.

These five teaching collections give a good impression of how Gampopa and/or his students, who wrote these texts, combined teachings belonging to different layers of Buddhism. They are therefore important when trying to evaluate the Mahāmudrā teachings of the early bka' brgyud traditions. David Jackson is one of the few Western researchers who until now has treated these teaching cycles. In his study on the Mahāmudrā-critique by Sapaṇ (1182-1253)[64], he makes reference to three of these texts[65], where he particularly discusses how Gampopa separated Sūtra, Tantra, and Mahāmudrā[66].

1.6. Dialogues

Bka' 'bum contains four texts with dialogues (Tib. zhus lan) between Gampopa and some of his closest students[67]; each text is devoted to the questions of a particular student. The questions posed by the students have no particular structure, which means that these texts manage to cover a lot of different topics, particularly practical questions about how to combine different kinds of meditation practices, but more philosophical questions are also raised with regard to Gampopa's doctrine. In that sense, these texts also provide a good perspective of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine as it here gets related to other aspects of Buddhism, especially the practices of Vajrayāna.

Rje dwags po'i zhal gdams dang/ rje sgom tshul gyi zhu lan[68], 42 pages, consists of questions posed by Gampopa's nephew dwags po sgom tshul (1116-1169), who was also mentioned in the preceding section. The questions cover several different topics and the answers are usually quite brief, but most of the questions concern Vajrayāna practice, particularly the tantric yogas. These practices are compared to meditation directly on the mind. Other questions are more philosophical, e.g. about the all-base consciousness (Tib. kun gzhi rnam shes). A separate section[69] begins towards the end of the text, which is written by lang ban dharma kumara. This seems to be a teaching given by dwags po sgom tshul to his own students. First, there is a little poem about meditation, while the rest is a motivational talk.

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[64] Jackson, 1994.

[65] *Bka' 'bum*, text 5-6 and 8: *mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma, chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs, rje dwags po rin po che'i tshogs chos chen mo.*

[66] Cf. Jackson, 1994, pp. 14-37.

[67] *Bka' 'bum*, text 9-12.

[68] *Bka' 'bum*, text 9.

[69] *Mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 25-33.

Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan[70], 172 pages, consists of questions posed by khams pa dbu se (a.k.a. karma pa dus gsum mkhyen pa)(1110-1193) and is the longest of the dialogue-texts. Its colophon says that these sayings of the 'three uncles' (Tib. khu dbon gsum) were given by slob (sic!) dpon sgom chung to slob dpon stod lung pa, who gave them to 'me'[71]. The actual author is thus unknown, but when judging from the number of people involved, it seems that these dialogues were compiled after Gampopa's death. The text begins with a section, where khams pa dbu se tells Gampopa about his meditation experience, dreams, etc. to which Gampopa advises how to react. The following section deals with Vajrayāna practice. Then comes a piece in which Gampopa tells about his own teachers, youth, and meditation experiences. This piece of the text is, in fact, the earliest biographical source to Gampopa's life[72]. The text then continues with a piece on meditation practice, where a combination of Vajrayāna and Mahāmudrā meditations are taught. After that follow a number of questions on the distinction between conventional Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, and Mahāmudrā, which are intertwined with more specific questions about Mahāmudrā. The rest of the text consists of questions and answers on Vajrayāna, Mahāmudrā, and various topics belonging to the conventional Mahāyāna. Here one also finds a teaching on the so-called 'four dharmas of Gampopa'. As can be seen from the above, this text contains a wealth of details on Gampopa's meditation methods. Given all the biographical issues and questions concerning inner experiences, this text is the most personally intimate of the four dialogue-texts.

Rje phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan[73], 52 pages, consists of questions posed by phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan (1110-1170) to Gampopa. Phag mo gru pa especially questions Gampopa on his Mahāmudrā doctrine. Many of the questions are of a more philosophical nature, which often serve to distinguish the Mahāmudrā teachings of Gampopa from the more conventional tantric teachings, etc. Towards the end of the text, there is a section with questions posed by rnal 'byor chos g.yung to Gampopa, which mainly concern meditation practice and how do make meditation retreat. Thereafter comes another section with some more questions of phag mo gru pa concerning Mahāmudrā.

Rnal 'byor chos g.yung gi zhus lan[74], 7 pages, consists of questions by rnal 'byor chos g.yung (1100-1177). These questions mainly deal with meditation on the nature of the mind, i.e. Mahāmudrā. In the middle of the text, there is a reference to what Gampopa have said

[70] *Bka' 'bum*, text 10.

[71] *Mdzod*, vol. kha. p. 265.

[72] Cf. section 1.2.

[73] *Bka' 'bum*, text 11.

[74] *Bka' 'bum*, text 12.

concerning a topic[75], which clearly indicates that this text was not directly spoken by Gampopa. At the end of the text[76], there is an exact list of the students of Gampopa.

These four texts especially serve to clarify points of doubt with regard to the tantric yogas and the practice of Mahāmudrā, since their dialogue form easily brings out the relevant issues. So far, two Western researchers have touched upon these texts. In a translation of a Mahāmudrā text by bla ma zhang (1123-1193), Dan Martin wrote an introduction to bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā based on *rjes phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan*[77]. He, for example, gave a very fine survey of the four levels of Mahāmudrā practice (Tib. rnal 'byor bzhi) based on this text[78]. David Jackson has also made several references to *rjes dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan* and *rjes phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan* in his book on the Mahāmudrā critique by Sapaṇ[79]. Jackson also provides a list of occurrences of the controversial term 'the self-sufficient white' (Tib. dkar po chig thub)[80] in the two previously mentioned texts[81].

1.7. Tantric Instructions

The majority of the texts in *bka' 'bum* are meditation instructions (Tib. khrid) on the tantric yogas and the special Mahāmudrā doctrine of Gampopa. These texts are mostly in note-form, probably written by Gampopa's students or their followers. A few of the texts seem to be later compilations in that they are written in mnemonic verses. So far, no Western scholars have analyzed the tantric instruction texts of *Bka' 'bum*. There are five texts that focus on giving instruction on the tantric yogas known as the 'Six Doctrines of Nāropa' (Tib. nā ro chos drug), which are also referred to as 'the method-way' (Tib. thabs lam). These teachings were the specialty of Gampopa's tantric teacher, mi la ras pa.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyus pa[82], 39 pages, is a collection of thirteen meditation instructions on Mahāmudrā and the six doctrines of Nāropa. The text starts by explaining the preliminary practice of Mahāmudrā, viz. meditation on the teacher (Tib. bla ma'i rnal 'byor). Three sections giving a very concise instruction on Mahāmudrā practice follow this. The rest of the text deals with the tantric yogas, the above-mentioned 'Six Doctrines of Nāropa': (1) gtum mo, (2) 'od gsal, (3) rmi lam, (4) sgyu lus, (5) 'pho ba, and (6) bar do.

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[75] *Mdzod*, vol. kha, p. 37.

[76] *Mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 39-41.

[77] Martin, 1992, pp. 244-252.

[78] Ibid. pp. 250-252.

[79] Jackson, 1994, pp. 9-42.

[80] Cf. section 3.2. regarding this term.

[81] Jackson, 1994, pp. 149-154.

[82] *Bka' 'bum*, text 13.

Rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung dmar khrid gsang chen bar do'i dmar khrid 'pho ba'i dmar khrid zhal gdams dang bcas pa[83], 66 pages, is another instruction text on tantric practice. It is possibly written by dwags po bsgom tshul, since he is mentioned in the text as a lineage holder[84]. The text begins with an explanation on the preliminary practices and the developing stage (Tib. bskyed rim) of the Hevajra Tantra. Thereafter, it turns to explaining the Vajrayāna yogas associated with the completion stage (Tib. rdzogs rim), the so-called 'method way' (Tib. thabs lam): grong 'jug, bde ba, sgyu lus, 'od gsal, gtum mo, rmi lam, bar do, and 'pho ba. Several different instructions are given in connection with each practice and are very detailed.

Rje dwags po lha rjes mdzad pa'i phyag rgya chen po rdo rje ye shes dbang dang phag mo'i gzhung mdo dang bcas pa[85], 24 pages, consists of different ritual texts on the goddess rdo rje rnal 'byor ma. It starts with an initiation-ritual, which also contains some notes on its symbolism. This is followed by a practice text written by dwags po bsgom tshul. The text ends with a section on sacrifice and homage.

Rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung sgros/ snyan brgyud gsal ba'i me long[86], 31 pages, is again a text dealing with the tantric yogas of the completion stage. It contains explanations on the inner channels (Tib. rtsa) and the different practices that utilize these channels, viz. 'pho ba, rmi lam, gtum mo, 'od gsal, sgyu lus, las rgya, and bar do. The text also contains a good general survey of the Vajrayāna approach.

Rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ snyan brgyud brjed byang ma[87], 28 pages, is another text containing instructions on the already mentioned practices: gtum mo, rmi lam, bar do, 'pho ba, gnyid 'od gsal, sgyu lus, and grong 'jug 'pho ba.

1.8. Mahāmudrā Instructions

The next section of *bka' 'bum* contains ten literary works that solely deal with Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine. As these texts contain the most concentrated material on Mahāmudrā, they ought to be the main focus for future research into Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine. So far, only a single of the ten texts have been analyzed by Western scholars, in that David Jackson has given a survey of the very brief Mahāmudrā text entitled *phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag thog babs* (see below). Otherwise, these texts are still quite unknown to the West.

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[83] *Bka' 'bum*, text 15.

[84] Cf. *bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 197-198.

[85] *Bka' 'bum*, text 16.

[86] *Bka' 'bum*, text 17.

[87] *Bka' 'bum*, text 18.

Sems kyi mtshan nyid gab pa mngon du phyung ba[88], 18 pages, contains Mahāmudrā instructions taught by Gampopa to rnal 'byor chos g.yung[89]. The text is written in mnemonic verse form, which indicates that it is a later compilation. The beginning speaks about the buddha nature (Tib. bde gshegs snying po), where after the texts turns to Mahāmudrā meditation. The style of this teaching is pure subitism[90], in that Gampopa, for example, says: "Look, look – there is nothing to see. Develop, develop – there is nothing to develop."[91]

Rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung zhal gyi bdud rtsi thun mong ma yin pa[92], 61 pages, is a full introduction into Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine called 'Integration of the Innate' (Tib. lhan cig skyes sbyor). The text stresses the importance of the basic motivational teachings taught in conventional Mahāyāna, such as cultivating an understanding of impermanence, karma, suffering, compassion, and bodhicitta. Also, the importance of the teacher is emphasized. There are sections giving very concise instruction on Mahāmudrā meditation. Also, many of the issues that were later criticized with respect to Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach are clarified here. It is, for example, explained that only those of lower capacities need to approach Mahāmudrā through relying on the tantric sexual practices. These practices involve intercourse, where the female partner is seen as a symbol for highest wisdom (Skt. Karmamudrā, Tib. las rgya). Instead, Gampopa says that those of highest capacity can go straight for Mahāmudrā without relying on these tantric techniques. Much reference is also made to conventional Mahāyāna teachings, where it is explained how blo sbyong practice can lead to Mahāmudrā. Comparisons are likewise made between the tantric teachings of mi la ras pa and the conventional Mahāyāna of the bka gdams pa tradition. The distinction between a gradual approach (Tib. rim gyis pa) and an instant approach (Tib. cig char ba) is also mentioned several times.

Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag thog babs dang mgur 'bum rnams[93], 30 pages, consists of two parts. The first part, which is called *Thunder Strike* (Tib. thog babs) was written by Gampopa's student dwags po sgom chung based on Gampopa's instructions. It begins with dispelling five misunderstandings about Mahāmudrā. One of these misunderstandings is a point, which Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine was later accused of by

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[88] *Bka' 'bum*, text 14.

[89] Cf. colophon, *rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, p. 18.

[90] Subitism (from Greek 'subitus', suddenly, quickly) is a term, which was used by Stein, 1971, and Demiéville, 1973, to denote the instantaneous approach to enlightenment (Tib. cig char 'jug pa). The term is also used with respect to Southern Chinese Ch'an, the subitist school (Chi. tun-chiao), that teaches instant enlightenment (Chi. tun-wu).

[91] *Rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, p. 14: "ltos shig ltos shig ci yang ma blta zhig /sgoms shig sgoms shig ci yang ma bsgom zhig."

[92] *Bka' 'bum*, text 19.

[93] *Bka' 'bum*, text 20.

Sapaṇ, viz. that it should take three immeasurable aeons to realize Mahāmudrā[94]. David Jackson has made two references to this part of the text, and gives a summary of the five misunderstandings[95]. A similar instruction, which is also entitled *thog babs,* is found in *bka' 'bum*, text 25 (see below). This part of the text ends with an explanation on how to begin a Mahāmudrā practice, how to maintain it, and how to implement it. The second part of the text, *Anthology of Songs* (Tib. *mgur 'bum*), contains three poems or songs attributed to Gampopa. The first song, entitled *Song of Eleven Points of Gratitude* (Tib. *bka' drin bcu gcig gi mgur*), expresses thanks to the teacher. The last two songs, which together are called *Songs of Certitude* (Tib. *gdeng tshad kyi mgur*), explain how to practice meditation.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po gsal byed kyi man ngag[96], 6 pages, gives a brief survey of Mahāmudrā practice in mnemonic verse form interspersed with prose sections. In the middle of the text, dwags po sgom tshul is mentioned as the author, and it is very likely that he has written the entire text. The text ends with a piece called *Miscellaneous Sayings of Gampopa* (Tib. *rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung sgros thor bu lags*). This piece covers in prose form a number of topics, e.g. statements on the developing and completion stages of the Vajrayāna (Tib. bskyed rim, rdzogs rim) as well as Mahāmudrā instructions.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i sgom rim[97], 26 pages, is a text on tantric Mahāmudrā. This term indicates that the realization of Mahāmudrā is to be approached through the tantric sexual techniques[98]. The basic instruction taught here covers five points, which are said to be enigmatic (Tib. bsam gyis mi khyab pa): the view, the method, the conduct, the inclusion of everything, and the stages of the way with its results. It is then explained how different masters of the transmission-lineage taught these five points. These masters are Vajrapāṇi, slob dpon bzang po, tog rtse ba, la ba pa, Tilopa, Nāropa, mar pa and mi la ras pa. This text is rather interesting in that it puts Gampopa's Mahāmudrā teachings into an Indian perspective.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig[99], 31 pages, is a Mahāmudrā text written by Gampopa's student shes rab byang chub. Most of the text is written in verse-form interspersed with a few sections in prose. It contains a wealth of information on Mahāmudrā. Mahāmudrā is here distinguished from tantric practice,

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[94] Cf. section 3.3.

[95] Jackson, 1994, p. 40 and pp. 81-82.

[96] *Bka' 'bum*, text 21.

[97] *Bka' 'bum*, text 22.

[98] The distinction between tantric Mahāmudrā and Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine will be explored in chapter 3 and 4.

[99] *Bka' 'bum*, text 23.

and it is said that tantric meditation is but one kind of zhi gnas/lhag mthong practice leading up to Mahāmudrā.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba la ngo sprod pa zhes kyang bya snang ba lam khyer gyi rtog pa cig chog ces kyang bya phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma mi gyur ba ces kyang bya[100], 24 pages, is a Mahāmudrā text written by Gampopa's student dwags po sgom chung. Besides explaining the Mahāmudrā practice, it also contrasts Mahāmudrā with the conventional Mahāyāna teachings of the bka' gdams pa tradition and the tantric teachings of mi la ras pa. There are also instructions on the tantric yogas.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ snying po'i ngo sprod don dam gter mdzod[101], 34 pages, is a Mahāmudrā text written partly in verse and partly in prose. The author is unknown. It contains instructions given to different students of Gampopa, e.g. 'ol ka'i yon bdag mo and dwags po sgom chung. The text covers all the common Mahāmudrā instructions, such as the two kinds of innate (Tib. lhan skyes) and the mind's essence, nature and identity (Tib. ngo bo, rang bzhin, mtshan nyid). There is also a section on the *Thunder Strike* instruction (Tib. thog babs), which was mentioned in connection with *bka' 'bum* text 20 and David Jackson's study (see above). Most of the text is clearly well arranged and also contains quotations from various Tantras.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ rnam rtog don dam gyi ngo sprod[102], 32 pages, is a melting pot of conventional Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, and Mahāmudrā teachings. Much of the text is spent on explaining the differences between the bka' gdams pa tradition, the Vajrayāna approach, and Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine. There are also given instructions for each of these traditions. The text, for example, contains two lam rim sections. The first is a section called *A Summary of the Stages of the Path* (Tib. lam rim mdor bsdus), which follows Atīśa's text *byang chub sgron me*[103] in explaining the approaches for the three kinds of individuals (Tib. skyes bu gsum). The second is section called *The Heart of the Stages of the Path* (Tib. lam rim snying po). Before, between, and after such sections on conventional Mahāyāna are text-pieces dealing purely with Mahāmudrā or Vajrayāna.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ sgrub pa snying gi ngo sprod[104], 28 pages, is a text in verse-form interspersed with explanatory notes in prose. The author is unknown. It firstly teaches how one has to look at the mind, secondly that the mind is the state of enlightenment (dharmakaya, Tib. chos sku), and thirdly that all experiences arise within this enlightened state. A section called *snying po don ldan*, which explains the Mahāmudrā view, meditation, and conduct follows this. The next piece, entitled *lhan cig chos sku'i nyams len*, gives a basic

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100 *Bka' 'bum*, text 24.

101 *Bka' 'bum*, text 25.

102 *Bka' 'bum*, text 26.

103 Cf. chapter 3.

introduction to some of the central Mahāmudrā terms and compares Mahāmudrā with non-Buddhist practices, the Hīnayāna, and the Vajrayāna. The last piece of the text, which is called *phyag rgya chen po mtshan nyid bzhi ldan*, is an extremely brief synopsis of the Mahāmudrā basis, way, and result.

1.9. Miscellaneous Works

After the ten texts dealing more purely with Mahāmudrā, *bka' 'bum* continues with eight texts that contain a mixture of teachings on conventional Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, and Mahāmudrā. In these texts, one particularly finds some very interesting comparisons between the bka' gdams pa and bka' brgyud traditions. They thus help to distinguish the particular flavor of Gampopa's teachings.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ mdo sngags kyi sgom don bsdus pa[105], 33 pages, consists of two parts. The first part deals with the differences between the bka' gdams pa tradition and the tantric teachings of mi la ras pa. It starts by introducing the bka' gdams pa teachings and also explains how the Tantras are practiced within this tradition. This is followed by a full survey of standard Vajrayāna practice, i.e. the developing and completion stages. The second part of the text, which is called *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i nyams len gyi gnad bsdus pa lags*, continues with a mixture of bka' gdams pa, Vajrayāna, and Mahāmudrā explanations. At the beginning of this section, there is also a short piece about the Tibetan translator rin chen bzang po.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung sgros du ma sgrigs pa[106], 27 pages, consists of a mixture of Vajrayāna and conventional Mahāyāna teachings written by dwags po sgom tshul (a.k.a. tshul khrims snying po). The text starts with a brief explanation on the stages of tantric practice, which is followed by a motivational teaching on impermanence. In the middle of the text, there is a brief explanation on the three kinds of vows (Tib. sdom gsum). The rest of the text consists of various Mahāmudrā and conventional Mahāyāna teachings.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bslab gsum rnam bzhag la sogs pa[107], 59 pages, starts with an explanation on the three kinds of training (Tib. bslab gsum), viz. discipline, meditation, and insight. This was taught by Gampopa to dwags po sgom tshul and dwags po sgom chung, who in turn taught it to pho ro ba. The next piece of the text discusses meditation according to both the bka' gdams pa tradition and mi la ras pa. Much is said on the issue of thoughts (Tib. rnam rtog) and how to deal with them during meditation. Thereafter follows a

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104 *Bka' 'bum*, text 27.

105 *Bka' 'bum*, text 28.

106 *Bka' 'bum*, text 29.

107 *Bka' 'bum*, text 30.

section, which concerns Vajrayāna according to the bka' gdams pa and bka' brgyud traditions. This is continued with some Mahāmudrā teachings. An extended discussion on conventional Mahāyāna according to bka' gdams pa and Vajrayāna according to bka' brgyud follows. The text ends with an explanation on the transmission lineages, which continues at least into the fourteenth century. The text is here referred to as the collected works (Tib. bka' 'bum) of Gampopa, and it may thus have been an early compilation of different Gampopa texts.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ gnas lugs gnyis kyi man ngag dang go cha gnyis kyi man ngag[108], 104 pages, starts with a text written in verse form interspersed with prose commentaries. It refers to the lineage of Tilopa and Nāropa, and gives a number of tantric instructions especially associated with the method way (Tib. thabs lam) of the completion stage (Tib. rdzogs rim). The second part of the text, which is called *go cha gnyis kyi man ngag*, is a Mahāmudrā instruction text. It is explained that Mahāmudrā practice should be guarded by a twofold 'armor' (Tib. go cha): one's view (Tib. lta ba) and one's insight (Tib. shes rab). The view is a certain understanding of the nature of the mind that one must develop, and this is explained in some detail. The insight refers to the meditation experience, and it is taught how one should develop this experience and which stages one will progress through. The rest of the text deals with a variety of tantric and Mahāmudrā issues. There are also some points on the differences between conventional Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, and the tradition of Maitrīpa. The text ends with a supplication to the transmission-lineage written by dwags po sgom tshul.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bka' tshems dang phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan/ lam mchog rin chen phreng ba/ chos bzhi mdor bsdus/ nyams lan mdor bsdus/ gnad kyi gzer gsang/ zhal gdams gsang mdzod ma/ ḍom bhi pa'i gtum mo/ 'khrul 'khor gyi gtum mo/ bar do'i gdams pa/ 'pho ba'i zhal gdams rnams[109], 77 pages, is a collection of smaller texts on the tantric yogas and Mahāmudrā. It begins with explaining the tantric meditation of the developing stage (Tib. bskyed rim) in verse, which is interspersed with prose commentaries. Next, comes a section called *phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan*, which gives Mahāmudrā instruction in five points: view, meditation, conduct, instruction, and certainty. This is followed by another Mahāmudrā text entitled *lam mchog rin chen phreng ba*[110], which clarifies certain points of Mahāmudrā practice. The next piece is called *chos bzhi mdor bsdus*, which is a brief teaching on the so-called 'four dharmas of Gampopa' (Tib. dwags po lha rje'i chos bzhi): (1) to turn to the Dharma, (2) to follow the Dharma-way, (3) that the Dharma-way removes one's confusion, and (4) that this confusion turns into highest wisdom. Next comes a very beautiful poem entitled *nyams len mdor bsdus gnad kyi gzer gsang*, which contains all the essential points on meditation practice. The section called *zhal gdams gsang mdzod* contains a detailed

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108 *Bka' 'bum*, text 31.

109 *Bka' 'bum*, text 32.

110 This is not to be confused with *bka' 'bum* text 36, which bears the same title.

instruction on tantric practice, which is explained through the three intermediary stages (Tib. bar do), viz. life, dream, and death. This is followed by a piece giving explanations on the tantric practice called 'pho ba. The next section, which is called *'khrul 'khor gyi gtum mo dang/ ḍom bhi ba'i gtum mo rnams*, gives a number of different instructions on the tantric yoga called gtum mo. Then comes a text-piece called *bar do gzhi bzhi gdams pa*, which explains the tantric death practices called bar do and 'pho ba. Finally, the last piece, which is called *zung 'jug gi bshad pa*, explains the goals of the tantric practice.

Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bstan bcos gros 'debs bdud rtsi 'phreng ba dang 'dre bzhi rtsad gcod[111], 32 pages, is first of all a motivational text. The author is unknown. The text explains with great detail that one should not entertain worldly ambitions, but that one should rather turn away from the ways of saṃsāra. It is said to be senseless to study and practice Buddhism if one does not use it as a remedy against one's disturbing emotions (Tib. nyon mongs). The text then recommends developing devotion to one's teacher and stresses the importance of doing positive actions to perfect the development of inner richness (Tib. bsod nams kyi tshogs). The second part of the text, entitled *'dre bzhi rtsad gcod*, is a text discussing the belief in different kinds of ghosts. It is stressed that one should not believe in ghosts or be afraid of them. An explanation on some meditations, which can be used to utilize the belief in ghosts as help for one's spiritual practice, follows. The text ends with a one-page explanation on the nature of the mind entitled *sems kyi gzer*.

Zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i bcud bsdus[112], 30 pages, explains tantric vitalization-practices (Tib. bcud len). Most of the text concerns a recipe for a drink that should aid Mahāmudrā practice. The purpose and benefits of this drink are explained in great detail. A number of other vitalization-practices are also explained.

Mar pa'i tshigs bcad brgyad ma'i 'grel gtam[113] has unfortunately not been available to me, wherefore I cannot evaluate it here.

1.10. Mahāyāna Works

At the end of *bka' 'bum* are three works belonging to the lam rim/bstan rim genre[114]. Texts of this genre serve to give a survey of the stages of the bodhisattva way as it is explained according to conventional Mahāyāna. These texts are the best known among Gampopa's literary works, and have been subject to several translations. The major work, *dwags po thar rgyan*, has been one of the central sources for Gampopa among Western scholars (cf. section

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[111] *Bka' 'bum*, text 33.

[112] *Bka' 'bum*, text 34.

[113] *Bka' 'bum*, text 35.

[114] Conc. the lam rim/bstan rim distinction, cf. Jackson, 1996, pp. 229-230. Jackson classifies these Gampopa works as bstan rim texts.

1.2). As these texts focus on the conventional Mahāyāna teachings of the bka' gdams pa tradition, they have not been primary for this study, although they do contain small sections dealing with Mahāmudrā.

Zhal gdams lam mchog rin po che'i phreng ba[115], 35 pages, is a general guide to Buddhist practice consisting of twenty-eight groups of factors to be practiced or avoided. The last group teaches the Mahāmudrā view in brief, although the meditation practice is not explained here. At the end of the text, Gampopa states that this text combines the bka' gdams pa teachings of Atīśa with the teachings of mi la ras pa. It is clearly stated that Gampopa is the author of this text[116], and it is noteworthy that Gampopa here refers to himself as snyi sgom bsod nams rin chen. Snyi sgom, which means 'the meditator from snyi', is one of Gampopa's nicknames, while bsod nams rin chen is his monk-name. It was, in fact, with this text that Gampopa was first introduced to the West, namely with a translation published in 1935 by Evans-Wentz[117] in his book on Tibetan mysticism, *Tibetan Yogas and Secret Doctrines*. The text has later also been published in a good German translation[118].

Bstan bcos lung gi nyi 'od[119] is another Gampopa-text that I unfortunately have not been able to acquire, and I therefore cannot evaluate it here. David Jackson gives a reference to the Tibetan writer a khu chin shes rab rgya mtsho, who classifies this text as belonging to the lam rim genre[120].

Dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan[121], 447 pages, is the most well known literary work of Gampopa. The colophon of the text clearly states that it was written by Gampopa, and again Gampopa here refers to himself by his monastic name, bsod nams rin chen. The text is an exposition of the bodhisattva path according to conventional Mahāyāna in six main chapters. The first chapter concerns the cause for enlightenment, which is here presented as the buddha nature (Tib. bde gshegs snying po). This part of *dwags po thar rgyan* is based on the Indian classic *Ratnagotravibhāga*[122]. The second chapter concerns the condition for attaining enlightenment, which is the precious human existence (Tib. mi lus rin chen). The third chapter explains the contributing condition, namely the spiritual teacher (Tib. dge ba'i bshes gnyen). The fourth chapter, which is the most extensive, explains the instructions this teacher gives, viz. an exposition of the entire bodhisattva way. The fifth chapter explains the

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115 *Bka' 'bum*, text 36.

116 *Rtsibs ri par ma*, p. 515: "bka' phyag gnyis kyis gdams pa'i mdzod 'chang ba har dwags po snyi sgom bsod nams rin chen gyis bris pa rdzogs so."

117 Cf. Evans-Wentz, 1935.

118 Cf. Colsman, 1986.

119 *Bka' 'bum*, text 37.

120 Cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 241, note 4.

121 *Bka' 'bum*, text 38. Notice this work is referred to throughout this paper as *dwags po thar rgyan*.

122 Skt. Mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra, Tib. theg pa chen po'i rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos, by Maitreyanātha, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 4024, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 5525.

result of such a spiritual endeavor, enlightenment, and the last chapter concerns the beneficial activities that result from this attainment.

Dwags po thar rgyan was first introduced to Western readers in 1959 with Guenther's English translation[123]. The text has since then been translated into English and German three times more[124]. David Jackson has given a brief analysis and survey in his article on bstan rim literature[125]. In the same publication Jules B. Levinson noticed that *dwags po thar rgyan* is the first Tibetan exposition of the five paths (Tib. lam lnga) and the ten bodhisattva levels (Tib. sa bcu)[126]. In dwags po thar rgyan's presentation of the wisdom pāramitā (Tib. shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa), Gampopa gives a brief presentation of Mahāmudrā. Jackson observed that Gampopa in this piece of the text makes heavy reference to what he calls 'apocryphal Chinese sūtras', although he does not provide any concrete analysis. Nevertheless, Jackson takes this as a sign of affiliation between Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine and early presence of Chinese Ch'an in Tibet[127]. The hypothesis of such an affiliation will be brought up again in chapter 3.

This survey of the thirty-eight literary works of Gampopa involved a consideration of thoroughness. On the one hand, I found it necessary to describe these works in some detail, since most of the texts are still relatively unknown to Western readers. I would, for example, have liked to share my page-by-page notes on the contents of each text, as this would surely be a big help for anyone wishing to work further with any of these text. On the other hand, this survey is merely descriptive and it therefore quickly becomes repetitive reading. Since I also wish to contribute some research on the role of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā teachings, I have had to limit this account of his literary works. I hope the resulting compromise is still useful.

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123 Guenther, 1959.

124 Guenther, 1989, Holmes, 1995, and Lhündrub, 1996.

125 Jackson, 1996.

126 Levinson, 1996, p. 261.

127 Cf. Jackson, 1994, pp. 20-24.

Chapter 2: The Mahāmudrā of Gampopa

2.1. The Shortcut to Instant Enlightenment

A number of the literary works of Gampopa and his students presented above dealt directly with the tantric techniques known as the Six Doctrines of Nāropa. For reasons that will become apparent below, Gampopa, however, only taught these techniques to a small number of selected students. To the vast majority of students, he gave a basis of conventional Mahāyāna teachings as exemplified in the teaching collections or *dwags po thar rgyan*. When it came to meditation practice, he imparted Mahāmudrā instructions, which equals instant enlightenment, the goal of the Tantras. His Mahāmudrā approach was thus a shortcut directly to the highest level of tantric practice, which left out the tantric techniques normally used to reach this stage. David Jackson, who translates Mahāmudrā as 'Great Seal', also pointed to this:

> In the later part of his life, [sGam-po-pa] gave increasing attention to transmitting directly the highest Great Seal insight, perhaps in part also as an outgrowth of his own deepened and intensified spiritual insight. What was somewhat revolutionary about the approach sGam-po-pa adopted was that he sought ways to transmit this insight outside of the traditional Mantrayāna method, which treated it as an ultimate and highly secret "fruit" instruction to be conveyed only after full, formal tantric initiation and in connection with special yogic practices.[128]

The Tibetan history classic *Deb sngon* explains the novelty of Gampopa thus:

> Concerning that [teaching of the Great Seal], rJe-btsun Mid-la had not given the Path of Means (*thabs lam*) and Great Seal [instructions] separately from one another. But [sGam-po-pa] taught the instructions on the Path of Means to those who were suitable recipients of the Mantra teachings, and he gave instructions on the Great Seal to those who were suitable as recipients of the Perfection-Vehicle (Pāramitāyāna) teachings, even though they had not received tantric initiation. He composed then a step-by-step manual of practical instruction called the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor*, which became popularly known also as "Dags-po's Realization Teaching" (*dags po'i rtogs chos*). He taught that although the scriptures mention many essential qualities of teacher and students, a student need not have many qualities; it is enough if he just has devotion. He quickly produced realization of the Great Seal even in the minds of some unintelligent,

[128] Jackson, 1994, p. 10.

> poverty-stricken or evil persons. He also composed a treatise on the stages of doctrine of the bKa'-gdams tradition, while teaching many practical instructions too. Therefore it was famed that from this time the two rivers of bKa'-gdams-pa and Great Seal became blended.[129]

Deb sngon illustrates with another story how openly Gampopa taught Mahāmudrā in comparison with how selectively he taught the tantric methods, the Path of Means or the method way (Tib. thabs lam):

> In the end, when [sGam-po-pa] was passing into Nirvāṇa in the water-female-hen year (1153), two monks each holding a sacrificial cake (*bali*) in their hands approached, calling out: "We two request instructions on the Path of Means, so pray compassionately accept us!" "Don't let them come near," sGam-po-pa replied. Then one of his attendants advised them: "You should call out saying you are you are requesting the Great Seal!" Accordingly, those two also shouted out for a long time: "But we are requesting the Great Seal, sir!" Therefore, sGam-po-pa said, "Now send them in," and he let them in, and also bestowed upon them the instructions of the Great Seal. In this way he brought up the Great Seal alone from among his teachings.[130]

It is this particular Mahāmudrā approach that is the subject of this paper, and we shall first explore it in this chapter by looking into the literary works of Gampopa. A detailed presentation of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine has so far not been undertaken in Western sources. David Jackson provides a discussion on Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine without explicitly presenting it. Instead, he focuses on showing how this doctrine can be classified and compared to other approaches, particularly classical Tantra and conventional Mahāyāna[131]. Dan Martin present a brief outline of the four stages of Mahāmudrā (Tib. rnal 'byor bzhi) according to Gampopa[132], but such a brief exposition, of course, cannot capture the entire Mahāmudrā teaching. I will therefore here attempt to convey a general insight into the Mahāmudrā teaching of Gampopa in its entirety.

As a primary source is more valuable than any description I may give in paraphrase, I have chosen to let the works of Gampopa speak for themselves as much as possible. Here one, however, has to keep in mind that the Mahāmudrā texts contained in *bka' 'bum* are not authored directly by Gampopa, but were written by his students or their followers based more or less on the instructions given orally by Gampopa. The only actual primary sources (that can

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[129] *Deb sngon,* p. 400, Roerich, 1949, pp. 459-460. The translation is taken from Jackson, 1994, p. 11.

[130] *Deb sngon*, p. 402, Roerich, 1949, pp. 461-462. The translation is taken from Jackson, 1994, p 14.

[131] Cf. Jackson, 1994, chapter 1.

[132] Cf. Martin, 1992, pp. 250-252.

be established as such with at least some certainty) are the brief expositions of the Mahāmudrā-view found in *zhal gdams lam mchog rin chen phreng ba* and *dwags po thar rgyan*[133]. As these expositions do not involve the actual methods of Mahāmudrā, it is, however, necessary to turn to the other texts of *bka' 'bum*, which is what I have done here. Now, I shall let these age-old manuscripts speak their story.

2.2. The Basis for Mahāmudrā

The basis for Mahāmudrā is a certain understanding or view of the nature of the mind. A certain terminology is used to describe this nature, which I will present here. As Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine developed from the Tantras and Dohās of the Indian tāntrikas[134], a lot of its terminology originates with these genres. One such term is 'the innate' (Skt. sahaja, Tib. lhan cig skyes pa)[135], which is the perfection present within every experience, i.e. dharmakāya. Gampopa taught the innate in a twofold way: this purity is to be found both within experience as well as within the observer, i.e. the mind. Sho sgom byang chub ye shes writes:

> In general, there is no separation in Mahāmudrā, but for the sake of making the meditators experience the meaning of Mahāmudrā or for the sake of realizing what has not been realized, it may be divided into two aspects: the innate in the mind and the innate in experience. The innate in the mind is dharmakāya. The innate in experience is the light of dharmakāya. Moreover, the innate in the mind, dharmakāya, is free of all conceptuality. It is without color or shape, an uncontrived nature. It is without any identifiable essence. As an analogy, it is like space in that it pervades everything. It is without thought. It is empty of the emptiness of an unchanging essence. The innate in experience, the light of dharmakāya, is self-arisen as it is without cause and condition. It is free of the waves of concept. It is the various positive, negative and neutral thoughts that pass. As to whether these two are the same or different, they seem

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[133] *Bka' 'bum*, text 36 and 38.

[134] Tantra (Tib. rgyud) here refers to the tantric texts contained in bka' 'gyur, the collection of texts traditionally attributed to the historical Buddha. A Dohā (Tib. do hā, mgur) is a song or poem of realization usually attributed to an Indian tantric master, a so-called mahāsiddha (Tib. grub chen). For an exposition of the Dohā genre, cf. Kværne, 1977. I am here using the more broad designation tāntrika, which signifies any tantric practitioner in general.

[135] I find that this translation best captures the meaning of this term. One just has to be aware of that innate here means innate with every experience. David Jackson suggests the translation 'innate simultaneously arisen gnosis' for lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes, and thus also partly uses the translation 'innate'. Cf. Jackson 1994, p. 16. Another translation, suggested by Herbert Guenther and Per Kværne, is 'coemergence' or 'co-emergent' (although the word in our context is used as a noun). I disagree with this translation on the grounds that it is not a proper English word. Cf. Kværne, 1977, pp. 61-62.

different to those who have not realized them, but for those who have realized them by the instruction of a genuine teacher they are the same. As an analogy, they are like sandalwood and its fragrance, or the sun and its shine, or water and waves.[136]

Shes rab byang chub sums this up:

The innate in one's mind is the actual dharmakāya.
The innate in experience is the light of dharmakāya.
The innate in thought is the waves of dharmakāya.
The innate in inseparability is the meaning of dharmakāya.[137]

As indicated by the word 'inseparability' (Tib. dbyer med) in the last line, this explanation does not imply any dichotomy of subject and object, or of mind, experience and thought, since the innate is characterized by non-dichotomy (Tib. gnyis su med pa). Thus, sho sgom byang chub ye shes writes further:

The innate in experience is not beyond the innate in the mind. To realize this, one must realize three points. One should know that a variety appears out of a base that is nothing. One should know that the appearing variety is not something itself. And one should know that when this is realized, the non-dichotomy is inexpressible. Now, the base of nothing is the innate in the mind. The appearing variety is the innate in experience. That the appearing variety is not something itself should be understood in the way that the different thoughts are not true in any form. That the non-dichotomy is

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[136] *Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs*, bka' 'bum, text 4, vol. 1, pp. 338-339: "spyir phyag rgya chen po la dbye ba med kyang/ rnal 'byor pa rnams kyis phyag rya chen po'i don khong du chud par bya ba'i ched du'am/ ma rtogs pa rtogs par bya ba'i ched tsam du/ dbye ba rnam pa gnyis te/ sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa dang snang ba lhan cig skyes pa gnyis yin gsung/ de la sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa ni/ chos kyi sku yin/ snang ba lhan cig skyes pa ni chos sku'i 'od yin/ de yang sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa chos kyi sku te spros pa thams cad dang bral ba/ kha dog dang dbyibs dang bral ba rang bzhin ma bcos pa'o/ /ngo bo ngos bzung dang bral ba/ dpe nam mkha' lta bu yin te gang du yang khyab pa/ rnam par rtog pa med pa/ mi 'gyur ba ngo bo nyid kyi stong pa nyid kyis stong pa cig yin/ snang ba lhan cig skyes pa chos sku'i 'od ni/ rgyu rkyen dang bral bas rang byung rtog pa'i 'ong dba' rlabs dang bral/ blo bur gyi dge ba dang mi dge ba dang/ lung ma stan pa'i rnam rtog du ma dang bcas pa 'di yin/ de gnyis cig gam tha dad na ma rtogs pa rnams tha dad pa ltar snang yang bla ma dam pa'i gdam ngag gis rtogs pa rnams la cig yin te/ dper na tsan dan dang tsan dan gyi dri'am/ nyi ma dang nyi ma'i 'od zer ram/ chu dang chu'i rlabs lta bu."

[137] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig*, bka' 'bum, text 23, mdzod, vol. ka, p. 212: "rang sems lhan cig skyes pa chos sku dngos/ snang ba lhan cig skyes pa chos sku'i 'od/ rnam rtog lhan cig skyes pa chos sku'i rlabs/ dbyer med lhan cig skyes pa chos sku'i don."

> inexpressible when this is realized means that one cannot express the realization of the inseparability of experience and realization.[138]

One should, however, not think that the Mahāmudrā view just is a happy optimism of believing that everything is all right. A belief is a concept, while the innate is rather said to be free of conceptuality (Tib. spros bral). Being free of conceptuality is also the definition given to emptiness by the Madhyamaka philosophers, so one should therefore understand the innate to be empty. In other words, perfection lies within the realization of the emptiness of all concepts. To emphasize the empty, non-conceptual nature of the innate, Gampopa describes it as 'uncontrived' (Tib. ma bcos pa)[139]. Bsgom pa legs mdzes writes:

> By severing beliefs, reality is established as being free of all conceptuality; its nature is therefore uncontrived by thought . . . As long as one contrives, one does not realize the nature of the observer and the experience . . . The nature of reality is impenetrable by thought . . . Thus, dharmakāya is exactly the uncontrived awareness of the freedom of all conceptuality.[140]

Although the innate was described as being the true nature of every experience, feeling, or thought, it is not temporary (Tib. glo bur ba). Therefore, it is designated 'immanent' (Tib. gnyug ma)[141] in the sense that it is always present. Sho bsgom byang chub ye shes writes:

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[138] *Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs*, bka' 'bum, text 4, vol. 1, pp. 339-340: "snang ba lhan cig skyes pa yang sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa las ma 'das te/ de ltar rtogs par byed pa la rtogs par byed pa'i chos gsum ste/ gzhi cir yang ma yin pa las sna tshogs su shar bar shes par bya ba dang/ sna tshogs su shar yang don ci yang ma yin par shes par bya ba dang/ rtogs pa'i dus na gnyis med smrar mi btub par shes par bya'o/ /de la gzhi ci yang ma yin pa ni/ sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa'o/ /sna tshogs su shar ba ni snang ba lhan cig skyes pa'o/ /sna tshogs su shar yang don ci yang ma yin pa ni/ rnam par rtog pa du ma ste don ci yang ma yin par ni bden par shes par bya'o/ /rtogs pa'i dus su gnyis med smrar mi btub par bya ba ni/ snang ba dang rtogs pa gnyis med du rtogs pa don smrar med pa."

[139] David Jackson suggests the translation 'unaltered' – cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 181. I prefer the translation 'uncontrived', since the English word 'contrived', just like the Tibetan word bcos pa, has a negative association, while the word 'altered' is more neutral. It also makes a better translation in connection with a verbal-stem, e.g. 'as long as one contrives', as in the following quotation.

[140] *Mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, bka' 'bum, text 5, vol. 1, pp. 446-447: "chos kyi dbyings spros pa'i mtha' thams cad bral ba cig tu sgro 'dogs cod cing gtan la phebs pa'i gnas lugs kyi don de la blos bcos su med pa yin/ . . . bcas bcos byed na dran snang gi gnas lugs ma rtogs pa yin no/ . . . chos kyi dbyings kyi gnas lugs bsam gyis mi khyab pa/ . . . de ltar yang spros pa'i mtha' thams cad dang bral ba'i ngang de nyid la shes pa ma bcos pa de nyid chos kyi sku yin no."

[141] David Jackson uses the translation 'primordial mind' or 'original mind' (cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 13 and p. 187). The word's antonym is 'temporary' (Tib. glo bur ba), and thus it denotes something that is always present. I find the word 'immanent' conveys this meaning better than the words 'primordial' or 'original'.

What is the meaning of the immanent? It is to be ungrounded, unobstructed, unfaltering, incessant, undemonstrational, and inexpressible. Firstly, to be ungrounded is not to be based on any state of mind . . . To be unobstructed is be without any hope or fear, rejection or conviction. To be unfaltering is not to fall into either extreme of eternalism or nihilism. To be incessant is to be without wishes. To be undemonstrational is to be without any identity. To be inexpressible is to be beyond any expression.[142]

To sum up what has been said so far about the Mahāmudrā view, I may quote shes rab byang chub, who here also employs another synonym for the innate, namely 'the ordinary mind' (Tib. tha mal gyi shes pa)[143]:

The innate is the ordinary mind. It is the uncontrived. It is the immanent. It is dharmakāya. It is buddha. It is knowledge. By leaving the ordinary mind on its own, there can be no harm from outer and inner distractions.[144]

The nature of the mind is thus taught to be perfect enlightenment, but as long as this is not realized, one remains trapped in saṃsāra. Dwags po bsgom tshul says:

The three realms [of existence] have always been buddha.
Saṃsāra has always been nirvāṇa.
Beings have always been buddhas.
Obscurations have always been enlightenment.
Since always unrealized,

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[142] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, bka' 'bum, text 6, vol. 1, p. 518: "gnyug ma zhes bya ba'i don ci la zer na/ rten gang la yang ma bcas pa/ go gar yang ma 'gags pa/ phyogs gar yang ma lhung ba/ phugs gar yang ma btang ba/ dpe gang gis kyang mtshon du med pa/ brjod pa gang gis kyang thog tu mi phebs pa cig la zer ba yin gsung/ de la dang po rten gang la yang mi bca' ba ni/ shes pa ci la yang mi rten pa ste/ . . . go gar yang ma 'gags pa ni/ re dogs dgag sgrub gang yang med pa yin/ phyogs gar yang ma lhung ba ni/ rtag chad kyi mthar ma lhung ba'o/ /phugs gar yang ma gtang ba ni 'dod pa med pa'o/ dpe gang gis kyang mtshon du med pa ni/ ngos bzungs thams cad dang bral ba'o/ brjod pa gang gis kyang thog tu mi phebs pa ni/ brjod pa thams cad lad 'das pa yin gsungs so."

[143] This term is used to emphasize that Mahāmudrā is the nature of every 'ordinary' state of mind and not something to be sought beyond one's present state of mind. David Jackson uses the translation 'ordinary knowing' (cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 41), and thus relates the word to the process of gaining insight (knowledge) into Mahāmudrā rather than a word describing the nature of the mind. This is, however, not how this term is normally employed. Otherwise, the word could not be given as a synonym for the innate.

[144] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig*, bka' 'bum, text 23, mdzod, vol. ka, p. 211: "lhan cig skyes pa ni tha mal gyi shes pa yin/ /de ma bcos pa yin/ /de gnyug ma yin/ /de chos sku yin/ /de sangs rgyas yin/ /de ngo shes par byed pa yin/ /tha mal gyi shes pa rang gar bzhag pas/ /phyi nang gi g.yeng bas mi gnod pa yin no."

The three realms are but saṃsāra.
For reversing saṃsāra,
A genuine teacher's instruction is needed.[145]

2.3. The Way of Mahāmudrā

Although the innate mind is enlightenment, it is necessary to discover its quality through meditation. I shall now give a brief outline of how Gampopa taught the meditation of Mahāmudrā. Bsgom pa legs mdzes explains:

> Thus, understand everything to be unborn, and in this state abandon all flaws of dualistic concepts, such as meditation and no meditation, being and not being, etc. Rest free of grasping in a non-conceptual state.[146]

Obviously, it would be rather difficult just to enter such a state on one's on accord. Gampopa therefore points out again and again that one can only become able to see the innate by having it pointed out by a teacher, who is familiar therewith himself. Shes rab byang chub writes:

> In general, all beings in saṃsāra have always appeared as buddhas within, but as long as this has not been pointed out by the nectar of the teacher's instruction, it is impossible to realize this and liberation cannot be gained.[147]

Thus, as a preliminary, bsgom pa legs mdzes tells that one should rely on a proper teacher, develop openness for his influence, i.e. blessing (Tib. byin brlabs), and thereby be introduced to the nature of the mind:

> Since the secret Mantrayāna is a way of blessing, it is important first to enter the blessing of the teacher. Having entered the teacher's blessing, the seeing of wisdom has

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[145] *Chos rje dwags po ha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po gsal byed kyi man ngag,* bka' 'bum, text 21, mdzod, vol. ka, p. 173: "khams gsum ye nas sangs rgyas yin/ /'khor ba ye nas myang 'das yin/ /sems can ye nas sangs rgyas yin/ /nyon mongs ye nas byang chub yin/ /'on kyang ye nas ma rtogs pas/ /khams gsum pa ni 'khor ba yin/ /'khor ba las ni bzlog pa ni/ /bla ma dam pa'i gdams ngag dgos."

[146] *Mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, bka' 'bum, text 5, vol. 1, p. 428: "de ltar chos thams cad skye med du ngos zin pa dang de ka'i ngang la bsgom pa dang mi bsgom pa dang yod pa dang med pa dang la sogs pa bzung 'dzin blo'i dri ma dang bral bar byas la blo bral gyi ngang du 'dzin med du bzhag go."

[147] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig*, bka' 'bum, text 23, mdzod, vol. ka, p. 213: "spyir na 'khor ba'i sems can thams cad la/ /sangs rgyas ye nas rang chas su yod kyang/ /mtshon byed bla ma'i man ngag bdud rtsi yis/ /ma mtshon bar du rtogs shing grol mi srid."

begun. This rising realization of innate wisdom afterwards affects all phenomena that are experienced, making them self-liberated. One thus arrives at an awareness of wisdom, where all beliefs have been cut off from within.[148]

Gampopa thus taught his students to give rise to the first glimpse of enlightenment by relying on the teacher's influence, his blessing. This point is especially noteworthy, because he thereby taught the highest level of Tantra, Mahāmudrā, without giving tantric initiation and without teaching the usual preceding steps of tantric yoga. Instead, to gain the necessary first-hand experience of Mahāmudrā that would enable the student to enter the actual Mahāmudrā meditation, Gampopa instructed his students to practice meditation on the teacher (Tib. bla ma'i rnal 'byor). By making strong wishes to the teacher, one is introduced to his realization. In *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyud pa*, it is said:

> Concerning the way to guide oneself or others in the meditation of Mahāmudrā, since this [way] of ours is a transmission of blessing, the meaning of Mahāmudrā cannot arise in one's mind-stream as long as one has not received the blessing of the teacher. Thus, [one should] receive the teacher's blessing without difficulty. One receives [this blessing] by making wishes with conviction and trust. Those, who have the best conviction and trust, also get the best blessing. Those with a mediocre conviction and trust, [receive] a mediocre [blessing]. Those with inferior conviction and trust [receive] an inferior blessing. Without a stable conviction and trust, it is impossible to have a stable blessing. This is therefore the very core of the Dharma.[149]

The literary works of Gampopa also contain exact instructions on how to meditate on the teacher, but it would be too elaborate to translate such an instruction here[150]. Instead, we shall now turn to the actual Mahāmudrā meditation practice. Sho sgom byang chub ye shes explains it in brief:

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[148] *Mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, bka' 'bum, text 5, vol. 1, p. 348: "gsang sngags byin brlabs kyi lam pa yin pas/ /dang po bla ma'i byin rlabs zhugs pa gcig gal che ba yin/ bla ma'i byin brlabs zhugs nas ye shes kyi mthong sa phyed/ de lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes kyi rtogs pa shar bas/ phyi shes ba'i chos thams cad la sgrog rang grol la song nas/ ye shes kyi rig pa sgro 'dogs nang nas chod pa gcig yong ngo."

[149] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyud pa*, bka' 'bum, text 13, vol. 2, pp. 124-125: "rang ngam gzhan la phyag rgya chen po'i bsgom 'khrid lugs ni 'o skol gyi 'di byin brlabs kyi brgyud pa yin pas/ bla ma'i byin brlabs ma zhugs na phyag rgya chen po'i don brgyud la 'char mi srid pas/ bla ma'i byin brlabs 'jug pa la tshegs med/ mos gus yod pas gsol ba btab pa la rten nas 'jug pa yin/ mos gus rab la byin brlabs yang rab tu 'jug /mos gus 'bring la 'bring/ mos gus mtha' ma la byin brlabs mtha' ma/ mos gus gtan nas med na byin brlabs gtan nas mi 'jug pas chos nyid yin."

[150] Cf. for example *chos rje dwags po ha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyud pa*, bka' 'bum, text 13, vol. 2, pp. 125-130.

> To realize the innate wisdom, which should be understood to be like a dream dreamt by a mute or an infant, one must put it into experience. The practice for doing so consists of three points. First, one should relax the body and the mind by being effortless. Next, one should rest in an uncontrived state by being without any doubts. At the end, one should know all thoughts of the sense impressions to be unborn.[151]

The *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i sgom rim* explains the practice in the following way:

> There are three enigmatic methods . . . Be natural, serene and at ease. To be natural involves three things: relax the body and the mind within, leave the speech as it is without controlling the breath, and let the mind be unfounded. To be serene also involves three things. Let the mind be on its own and thus be free of attachment. By being mentally disengaged from the conceptual objects that appear as identities, know them to be dharmakāya, and do not stray from this. To be at ease likewise involves three things. In the three activities of daily life be without hope and fear. Thus, leave the senses and the mind at ease, and do not let the mind be separated from this experience.[152]

Yet another even more detailed description can be found in *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyud pa.* The preceeding section has just explained the preliminaries in detail and here the actual practice is being explained:

> Namo guru. Complete the necessary number of days, months and years of making wishes to the teacher. When the time has then come for the actual practice, begin the meditation session by engendering determination and so forth as a short preliminary. Thereafter, sit with the legs in the vajra-posture, etc. Do not meditate on Mahāmudrā. Do not meditate on the unborn, the lack of a nature, freedom from concept, what is

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[151] *Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs*, bka' 'bum, text 4, vol. 1, p.340: "lkugs pa'am bu chung gis rmi lam smis pa lta bur go ba'i lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes rtogs par byed pa la/ nyams su len dgos par nyams su blang ba'i chos gsum ste/ dang po 'bad btsol dang bral ba'i sgo nas lus sems klod (sic) pa dang/ bar du the tsom dang bral ba'i sgo nas ma bcos pa'i ngang la bzhag pa dang/ tha ma byung tshor gyis rnam par rtog pa thams cad skye med du shes par bya'o."

[152] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i sgom rim,* bka' 'bum, text 22, mdzod, vol. ka, pp. 189-190: "thabs bsam gyis mi khyab pa la gsum ste . . . so ma/ rang thang/ lhug pa'o/ /so ma la gsum ste/ lus sems khong glod pa dang/ ngag rlung mi bcings par rang dgar bzhag pa dang/ shes pa rten mi bca' ba'o/ /rang thang la yang gsum ste/ shes pa rang dgar btang yang zhen pa med pa/ spros pa'i yul mtshan mar snang yang yid la ma byas pas chos kyi skur shes par byas la/ de la ma yengs pa'o/ /lhugs pa la yang gsum ste/ spyod lam gsum la re dogs med pa tshogs drug lhug par bzhag pa/ shes pa nyams dang mi 'bral ba'o."

beyond the intellect, emptiness, selflessness, bliss, clarity and no-thought, not being established in any way or there not being something wanted and someone wanting it. Well, how should one then do it? A thought once passed leaves nothing behind. Future thoughts are not yet seen. Thus, identify the moment of the present thought. In brief, do not think about earlier or future thoughts, but find out how the thought of this very moment is. By looking nakedly at just this moment of the present thought, the thought is cut off as it is made to pass, and thus one enters an undistracted state free of thoughts. When a distraction or thought again clearly appears, search for its source. By looking nakedly, the thought is liberated by itself, and with balance, one enters non-conceptuality. In this way, search for and look directly at any thought that arises. Before the session becomes too long, stop while the experience is still clear, and in this way make many short sessions. By doing this repeatedly, one after some time understands the nature of thought whereby one reaches an understanding of all the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Merely through this, one reaches an insight fully knowing the nature of things, and thus one will truly transcend the three realms [of existence] completely.[153]

2.4. The Result of Mahāmudrā

How does such meditation influence the mind? Sho sgom byang chub ye shes explains:

[153] *Chos rjes dwags po lha rje'is gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyud pa,* bka' 'bum, text 13, vol. 2, pp. 130-132: "na mo gu ru/ /bla ma la gsol ba gdab pa lo zla zhag grangs thems pa dang/ dngos gzhi'i dus su thun mgo la zhe mna' skyal pa la sogs pa sngon 'gro sdus pa cig byas pa'i rjes la/ rkang pa'i rdo rje dkyil dkrungs la sogs pa bcas te/ phyag rgya chen po mi bsgom/ skye ba med pa'am/ rang bzhin med pa'am/ spros pa med pa'am/ blo las 'das pa'am/ stong nyid dam/ bdag med dam/ bde gsal mi rtog gam/ gang du yang ma grub pa la sogs pa'am/ 'dod 'dod po la sogs pa gang du yang mi bsgom/ 'o na ji ltar byed na/ rnam par rtog pa 'das pa'i rjes mi bcad/ /ma 'ongs pa'i rdun ma bsu/ da ltar gyi rtog pa skad cig ma 'di ngos 'dzin pa zhes bya ba yin te/ mdor na rnam par rtog pa snga ma la mi bsam/ phyi ma la mi bsam par da ltar nyid rnam rtog ci 'dra cig 'gyu yin 'dug/ snyam du da ltar gyi rtog pa skad cig ma 'di nyid la gcer gyis bltas pas/ rtog pa rgyu 'grul rbad kyis chad nas ma yengs par du rtog pa mi 'ong/ nam yengs pa dang rtog pa yer gyis 'ong te/ byung sa'i rtog pa de nyid la 'dod thog byas la/ cer gyis bltas pas rtog pa rang sar grol nas mi rtog par phyam gyis 'gro/ /de ltar rtog pa gang byung byung la 'dod thog byas shing ce re blta'o/ /thun yun mi ring tsam gsal 'phrol bcad cing yun thung la grangs mang du bya'o/ /de ltar yang dang yang du byas pas dus ji zhig tsa na rtog pa'i rang bzhin shes nas 'khor 'das la sogs pa'i chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin shes pa cig 'ong ngo/ /de tsam na/ shes rab kyis na chos kyi rang bzhin yongs shes nas/ khams gsum ma lus pa las yang dag 'da' bar 'gyur."

> Rest in the state of the uncontrived nature. In the ensuing state of mind, each arising thought is recognized as when meeting an old acquaintance. Thus, all thoughts of the sense-impressions are understood as being unborn.[154]

This kind of meditation practice is called yoga (Tib. rnal 'byor), which in Tibetan literally means 'uniting with the real'. Shes rab byang chub defines this yoga in the following way:

> Every observer, thought, experience, or feeling is nothing but the dharmakāya of one's mind. Yoga is to establish this view of whatever occurs in the state of dharmakāya of one's mind.[155]

As the experience of the innate is cultivated through such yoga, one progresses through four stages, the four yogas (Tib. rnal 'byor bzhi). These four are called one-pointedness, non-conceptuality, one-taste, and great meditation (Tib. rtse gcig, spros bral, ro gcig, mnyam bzhag chen po). Shes rab byang chub gives a short description of these:

> First, at the time of learning, exercise a clear and pure awareness. Then exercise an undistracted mind. Then exercise being undistracted in the essence of awareness. Once this has been cultivated, it is said that one has developed certainty within oneself. When one does not lose sight of the essence of the mind, any thought that arises is dharmakāya. The clouds or mist that appeared in the sky have dissolved back into the sky again. It is said that if one is not able to control the arising of thought, one will be able to do so later. Having generated the deity, meditate only on clear light. The pure clarity is the experience. To be undistracted in that is the abiding. The insight that does not to see any kind of essence is the realization. The momentary mind being unobstructed clarity is the yoga of one-pointedness. The realization that the essence of awareness is unborn, beyond being and non-being, is the yoga of non-conceptuality. The realization that what appears to be a variety actually is of a single nature is the yoga of one taste. The uninterrupted realization of the inseparability of experience and emptiness is great meditation. The essence of the mind is like the center of the autumn sky. It is without hope and fear, unchanging, uninterrupted at all times.[156]

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[154] *Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs,* bka' 'bum, text 4, vol. 1, pp. 340-341: "gnas lugs ma bcos pa'i ngang la bzhag /rjes kyi shes pa la rnam par rtog pa ci skyes thams cad sngar 'dris kyi mi dang phrad pa ltar shes par byas la byung tshor gyi rnam par rtog pa thams cad skye med du shes par bya'o."

[155] *Chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig,* bka' 'bum, text 23, mdzod, vol. ka, p. 212: "dran rtog myong tshor ma lus thams cad kun/ /chos sku sems las ma rtogs gzhan med pas/ /gang ltar song yang rang sems chos sku'i ngang/ /de ltar lta ba thag chod rnal 'byor yin."

[156] Ibid. pp. 222-223: "dang po slob pa'i dus rig pa gsal sing nge ba de la bslab/ /de yang shes pa ma yengs pa la bslab/ /de yang/ rig pa'i ngo bo ma yengs pa la bslab/ /de goms tsa na/ rang la nges shes skye ba yin gsungs/ sems nyid kyi ngo bo ma shor bar byas na/ rnam rtog ci byung yang chos sku yin/ nam mkha' la sprin dang/

Once the four yogas have been accomplished, one attains the goal of Mahāmudrā, which bsgom pa legs mdzes describes thus:

> It has been said, "The result is a spontaneously accomplished certainty free of hope and fear." The result is dharmakāya. That it is spontaneously accomplished means that one understands that everything one sees and hears has always been unborn, having the nature of dharmakāya. It is the realization of the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.[157]

As a summary, bsgom pa legs mdzes says:

> There are three aspects: the flawless basis, the flawless way and the flawless result. The first is the naturally pure nature. The second is to take the innate wisdom as the way. The third is not to be separated from the inseparability of space and wisdom . . . This instruction of taking the penetrating openness as the way is like a lotus flower; having established the flawless basis, one takes it as the way, whereby one attains the flawless result.[158]

We have thus seen that Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine begins with a certain understanding of the nature of the mind. It is said that every state of mind has an innate aspect of enlightenment, dharmakāya. This view is associated with the final level of Tantra, Mahāmudrā. To introduce a student to an experience thereof, Gampopa did usually not give tantric initiation nor did he teach the tantric methods. Instead he used a meditation on the

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khug rna la sogs pa ci tsam byung yang/ /nam mkha' rang la dengs nas 'gro ba yin/ /rnam rtog 'phror ma btub na slar thub yin gsungs/ yi dam lhar bskyed nas 'od gsal 'ba' zhig bsgom/ gsal sing nge ba de nyams myong yin/ /de la ma yengs pa de gnas pa yin/ shes rab kyi ci'i ngo bor yang ma mthong ba de rtogs pa yin/ gsal la ma 'gags pa skad cig ma'i shes pa de rtse gcig gi rnal 'byor yin/ /rig pa'i ngo bo skye med/ yod med las 'das par rtogs pa de spros bral gyi rnal 'byor yin/ sna tshogs su snang yang rang bzhin cig tu rtogs pa de du ma ro gcig gis rnal 'byor yin/ snang stong dbyer med du rgyun chad med par rtogs pa de mnyam bzhag chen po yin no/ /sems kyi ngo bo ni ston ka'i nam mkha'i dkyil lta bu/ re dogs med pa/ mi 'gyur ba/ dus thams cad du rgyun chad med pa de yin."

[157] *Mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma,* bka' 'bum, text 5, vol. 1, p. 430: "'bras bu lhun grub re dogs med pa'i gdeng tshud pa dang bzhi'o/ /ces pa ni/ 'ong ste de yang 'bras bu ni chos kyi sku yin la/ lhun grub ni snang grags kyi chos thams cad ye nas skye ba med pa chos kyi sku'i rang bzhin du go ste/ 'khor 'das gnyis su med du rtogs pa'o."

[158] Ibid. p. 425: "de la gsum/ gzhi dri ma med pa dang/ lam dri ma med pa dang/ 'bras bu dri ma med pa'o/ dang po ni chos nyid rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pa'o/ gnyis pa ni lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes lam du 'khyer ba'o/ gsum pa ni dbyings dang ye shes dbyer med pa'i don dang mi 'bral lo . . . zang thal lam du 'khyer bar

teacher, where the student is instructed to make intense wishes to the teacher with strong trust. Thereby, the student could receive the teacher's blessing and have a glimpse of the enlightened qualities of the mind. Once this experience had been achieved, the student would focus on actual Mahāmudrā meditation. This meditation basically consists of letting go of all contrived efforts and dwell in a clear awareness of the enlightened nature of every experience and thought. Once one becomes acquainted with this realization, every state of mind appears as enlightened. The ensuing result is to be free of all hopes and fears.

This approach first of all emphasized the role of the teacher, which may help to explain the immense importance devotion to the teacher generally plays in the bka' brgyud traditions. Second of all, it enabled Gampopa to introduce his followers to the highest level of Tantra without teaching the preceding steps of tantric yoga. Mahāmudrā thus changed from being the climax of tantric practice to be a much more subitist-oriented practice through its emphasis on instant enlightenment. It was therefore somewhat similar to other Buddhist, subitist approaches, e.g. Chinese Ch'an.

Was this kind of Mahāmudrā approach a novelty invented solely by Gampopa or was it already inherent in earlier Buddhist traditions? If it was a novelty, what then motivated Gampopa to formulate this system? These are the questions that now remain to be answered. As we shall see in the following chapter, some Tibetan defenders of the classical Indian tradition reacted very strongly against Gampopa's teachings. By looking into this critique, we get a very exact contrast between the forces at play in the Tibetan Buddhism of the twelfth to thirteenth century and Gampopa's role in it.

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byed pa'i gdams ngag ni/ gzhi dri ma med pa de nyid gtan la phab nas lam du 'khyer ba la brten nas/ 'bras bu dri ma med pa de nyid thob pa me rtog padma lta bu yin te."

Chapter 3: The Critique by Sa Skya Paṇḍita

3.1. Sa Skya Paṇḍita and the Sdom Gsum Rab Dbye

Seventy-nine years after the demise of Gampopa, the strongest criticism ever of his Mahāmudrā teaching was written by sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan[159] (1182-1253) in the *sdom gsum rab dbye*[160]. Sapaṇ belonged to the powerful 'khon clan that held the tantric teachings gathered in India by 'brog mi lotsa ba (993-1050)[161] and in 1216 Sapaṇ had become the religious head of the clan and its monastic center in sa skya[162]. Until the late twelfth century the sa skya lineage had foremost been a tantric tradition specialized in the lam 'bras teachings epitomized in the *rdo rje tshig rkang* authored by Virūpa[163], which is primarily based on the Hevajratantra and its associated literature. During the reign of Sapaṇ's uncle, bsod nams rtse mo (1142-1182), the sa skya followers opened up to a slight influence of the philosophical teachings of conventional Mahāyāna propagated earlier in Tibet by rngog lotsa ba blo ldan she rab (1059-1109). This happened, in particular, through the scholar phya pa chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169), who was a teacher of bsod nams rtse mo. With the writings and activities of Sapaṇ, this shift in orientation became much more pronounced. Besides studying the tantric teachings held by his clan, Sapaṇ also spent his formative years studying with a number of teachers from the tradition of rngog lotsa ba[164]. In 1205 Sapaṇ met the Indian scholar Śākyaśrībhadra (1127-1225), who had come to Tibet in 1204 by the invitation by khro phu lotsa ba (1172-1225). Sapaṇ spent several years with Śākyaśrībhadra and a few other Indian scholars from his entourage, and from them he especially learned Buddhist epistemology (Tib. tshad ma). His studies culminated around 1219[165], when he composed his masterpiece on epistemology, the *tshad ma rigs pa'i gter*.

While Sapaṇ with *tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* attempted to tidy up the epistemological muzziness of his Tibetan predecessors, he wrote *sdom gsum rab dbye* primarily to set straight the proper practice of Tantrism. The text basically deals with the three sets of Buddhist commitments (Tib. sdom gsum), viz. the commitments of Prātimokṣa, the bodhisattva doctrine and Tantrism. The first section on the Prātimokṣa vows covers twenty-four pages, and includes

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159 Henceforth I will use the abbreviated name Sapaṇ for the sake of convenience.

160 abbr. title of *sdom gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos.*

161 Cf. Van der Kuijp, 1983, p. 97.

162 Cf. Jackson, 1987, p. 27.

163 Skt. *mārga-phalānvitāvavādaka**, Tib. *lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i rtsa ba rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, by Virūpa, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2284, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3131.

164 For these events of the sa skya lineage and Sapaṇ's life cf. Van der Kuijp, 1983, p. 97-99.

165 Cf. Jackson, 1987, pp. 26-28.

a short piece criticizing the idea of buddha nature[166]. The second section on the bodhisattva vow covers only eight pages[167]. The major part of the text is therefore the third section, covering sixty-two pages, which deals with the practice of Tantrism. Sapaṇ was here much more concerned with criticizing what he considered improper rather than explaining the actual meaning of the tantric commitments. In particular, he vehemently attacked the bka' brgyud tradition of Mahāmudrā started by Gampopa and the way in which it was later propagated by the bri gung and tshal pa bka' brgyud traditions[168].

Sdom gsum rab dbye was written about 1232[169], when Sapaṇ was fifty years old. Just twelve years later, in 1244, he set off to meet the Mongol prince Ködän and made a settlement with the Mongols in 1249 that, on the one hand, possibly stopped a Mongolian invasion of Tibet, but, on the other hand, delegated great secular powers to Sapaṇ's 'khon clan in Tibet[170]. Sapaṇ's Mongolian mission sheds some light on the power of the 'khon clan in sa skya already prior to the mission. Sapaṇ received a summons from Prince Ködän in 1244, which shows that Ködän must have considered Sapaṇ the most influential man in Tibet of his day. *Sdom gsum rab dbye* was thus not merely a criticism, but it was a criticism coming from one of the most influential persons in Tibet at the time, whose power was felt both scholastically and secularly. Indeed, one should understand this criticism in the light of the political climate of the time. As Geoffrey Samuel writes:

> Among Gampopa's disciples were several founders of major monastic *gompa*, each of which served as the center for a Kagyüdpa suborder in later days . . . These *gompa* were to be the Sakyapa order's main rivals in the power struggles of the thirteenth century.[171]

In fact, the bka' brgyud monasteries, e.g. the bri gung and tshal pa traditions, were competing with the sa skya pa for the favor of the Mongols. Stein writes, "the karma-pas were going to be the Sakya-pas rivals at the court of the Emperors of China – first Mongolian (Yüan) and later Chinese (Ming)."[172] Karma pakshi (1206-1283), head of the kam tshang bka' brgyud branch, was sent for by Kublai Khan and met him in a mdo in 1255, although it did not

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166 This piece is translated in Ruegg, 1973, pp. 31-32.

167 Cf. Tatz, 1982, pp. 5 ff.

168 The bri gung bka' brgyud propagated a Mahamudra doctrine known as dgongs gcig while the tshal pa bka' brgyud propagated a Mahamudra doctrine known as dkar po chig thub (cf. Martin, 1992).

169 Cf. Jackson, 1987, p. 28. In another publication Jackson suggests the year 1235 (Cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 116).

170 Cf. Jackson, 1987, pp. 28-29. For more details on the Mongolian mission of Sapaṇ cf. Szerb, 1980a, Stein, 1972, pp. 75-79, Ruegg, 1966, pp. 4-10.

171 Samuel, 1993, p. 479.

172 Stein, 1972, p. 77. For a brief summary of the Mongolian Game, cf. Stein, 1972, pp. 75-79, and 'phrim-las, 1991, pp. 42-53.

lead to any lasting patronage. One may also note the 'bri gung rebellion 1285-1290, where the 'bri gung branch of the bka' brgyud supported by an army of Persian Mongols rose against the sa skya rule. In the end, the rebellion was put down by the sa skya pa, at which point the 'bri gung monastic center got torched and burned down[173]. The critique of *sdom gsum rab dbye* thus appeared in a climate of political struggle between the sa skya and bka' brgyud traditions[174].

As a help to understand the verses of *sdom gsum rab dbye*, I have used two commentaries. The first, which is simply the root-verses occasionally interspersed with an explicatory phrase or two, is the *sdom gsum rang mchan 'khrul med*, which seems to have been written by Sapaṇ himself[175]. The second is a commentary to *sdom gsum rab dbye* written by go ram pa bsọd nams seng ge (1429-1489), which is called *rgyal ba'i dgongs gsal*[176]. According to its colophon, this commentary was written in 1463, which is 231 years after Sapaṇ composed his text.

3.2. Sapaṇ and the Indian Buddhism

The standpoint on Mahāmudrā found in *sdom gsum rab dbye* accords with the Anuttarayoga Tantras. Sapaṇ admonishes that one should strictly follow the Indian Tantras and their associated Indian commentaries. He finds that the Mahāmudrā doctrine of Gampopa goes against the Tantras, because Gampopa taught Mahāmudrā independently of the tantric initiations and their meditation techniques. In the eyes of Sapaṇ, Mahāmudrā is exclusively associated with the wisdom that appears when practicing these tantric initiations. Before we look at how Sapaṇ formulates his critique, we will take a quick look at the role of Mahāmudrā in Indian Buddhism, since Sapaṇ is a staunch defender of the Indian tradition.

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[173] Cf. 'phrim-las, 1991, pp. 50-52.

[174] David Jackson objects to such an interpretation of Sapaṇ's motivation with writing this critique (cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 67). Indeed, he devotes an entire chapter of his book to show that Sapaṇ purely adhered to scholarly principles (ibid. chapter 5). He nevertheless admits elsewhere in the same book (ibid. p 72) that Sapaṇ by his criticism attempted to counter the continuing influence of the tshal pa bka' brgyud sect founded by bla ma zhang (1123—1193), which was a major contender for political power. Of course, we can never really know Sapaṇ's motivation, but I don't think it makes sense to deny the political climate in which these religious sects developed. After all, it was very much through the efforts of Sapaṇ that Tibet developed into an ecclesiastical state.

[175] The text itself does not state that it was written by Sapaṇ, but the Tibetan tradition considers it an authentic work by him. David Jackson discusses the authenticity of this work, and concludes that it may be considered an authentic work. Cf. Jackson, 1991, pp. 242-249.

[176] Abbr. title of *sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba.*

Mahāmudrā is a Sanskrit word consisting of two stems, 'maha' meaning great, and 'mudrā' meaning seal. As the Tantras operate with a large number of mudrās, Mahāmudrā is a subtype of mudrā. The Sanskrit dictionary of Monier-Williams defines 'mudrā' as a seal, an instrument used for sealing, the stamp or impression made by a seal, and any image, sign, badge, or token in general[177]. In many of its Buddhist uses, the word comes close to the Western concept 'symbol' being anything that indicates a meaning beyond itself.

A number of late Mahāyāna Sūtras contain the word mudrā[178], and it is possible that the Tantras adopted the word from these texts. In these Sūtras, mudrā appears in the sense that emptiness marks or characterizes all phenomena; literally, that all phenomena are 'sealed' by emptiness. Among the different kinds of Tantra, the word has a more narrow meaning in the ritual practices of the Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga Tantras. Mudrā here signifies symbolic hand-gestures that are used both in the iconography as well as in the rituals.

In the Anuttarayoga Tantras, however, the meaning of mudrā becomes much more complex, and it is particularly in this context that the word Mahāmudrā has a deeper significance. The practice of these Tantras begins with receiving initiation by a teacher belonging to the lineage of a particular Tantra. The initiation is a ritual act consisting of four steps known as the four initiations. These initiations serve to indicate the realized experience and its qualities to the practitioner as well as the techniques for realizing it. The understanding achieved through the initiation must then be cultivated through the meditation practices related to each initiation. These meditation practices are divided into two steps known as the developing stage (Tib. bskyed rim) and the completion stage (Tib. rdzogs rim). In the end, however, the practitioner has to let go of all contrived, premeditated efforts, since the experience of emptiness obviously involves something that goes beyond the conceptuality of these stages as well.

The word mudrā particularly occurs in the tantric practices that employ the experience of sexual orgasm. The theory here is that the unraveling of thought or emptiness, which in tantric terminology is usually called 'clear light' (Tib. 'od gsal), naturally occurs during the experience of orgasm. By controlling this experience, one becomes able to abide in this experience and can thus utilize it for spiritual realization.

One here finds a constellation of three or four mudrās. A common list of these is dharmamudrā, jñānamudrā, karmamudrā, and mahāmudrā (Tib. chos rgya, ye rgya, las rgya, and phyag chen). All four mudrās are representations or symbols of the clear light, emptiness. Firstly, emptiness is represented by the teacher's instruction, which is called the teaching symbol, dharmamudrā. Secondly, to cultivate the experience of emptiness that appears during

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[177] Monier-Williams, 1899.

[178] Cf. *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i sgom rim gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad zla ba'i 'od zer*, pp. 163-186, for examples of the use of mudrā and Mahāmudrā in various Sūtras and Tantras.

sexual excitement and orgasm, one imagines being in sexual union with a female buddha, who thus symbolizes emptiness. This imagined partner is called the wisdom symbol, jñānamudrā. Thirdly, one may unite sexually with an actual partner to further this meditative experience, and this actual partner is then called the action symbol, karmamudrā. Through this sexual union, imagined or real, one experiences a partial glimpse of enlightenment, which is called indicatory wisdom (Tib. dpe'i ye shes). The indicatory wisdom enables the practitioner to progress to the final stage that is related to the fourth initiation, during which true wisdom (Tib. don gyi ye shes) is perceived. The true wisdom is referred to as the great symbol, mahāmudrā. This is the ultimate symbol, which does not point to enlightenment, but rather *is* enlightenment. Mahāmudrā is thus the final view of the Anuttarayoga Tantras and is first taught at the very climax of their practice. This view is the final stage, where the practitioner has attained a genuine realization of emptiness and must abandon all contrived efforts and remain in the understanding that every experience in its true nature is enlightenment[179].

As we shall now see, Sapaṇ maintains that Mahāmudrā can only be taught in this type of tantric context, namely as the outcome of the four initiations and the tantric meditations of the two stages. He therefore strongly disagrees with Gampopa's way of teaching Mahāmudrā directly without first bestowing the tantric initiations and without first teaching the tantric techniques involving the four mudrās. He consequently suggests that Gampopa's teaching should not originate with Indian Buddhism but that it instead should be rooted in Chinese Buddhism. In the next section, I will just present his critique with a few explanatory comments, and in the following sections I will analyze it to see what it might tells us about Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine.

3.3. The Mahāmudrā Critique in Sdom Gsum Rab Dbye

In the first part of the section in *sdom gsum rab dbye* dealing with Tantrism (p. 35ff), Sapaṇ criticizes the custom of allowing tantric practice without having first received a complete initiation given in the proper way. In the commentary of go ram pa it becomes quite clear that this criticism is directly pointed at the bka' brgyud traditions, where the expression "phyag rgya ba kha cig" is often used to signify these. In particular, there is an extended discussion of a bka' brgyud custom of allowing practice of gtum mo yoga and so forth after having only received a rdo rje phag mo blessing. One could sum up the view of Sapaṇ thus: if one does not want to follow the Tantras properly, one should rather follow the conventional Mahāyāna properly. If one wants to follow the Tantras, one should take the four initiations, meditate properly on the two stages and cultivate Mahāmudrā, which is the wisdom that arises therefrom.

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179 Cf. also Kværne, 1977, pp. 34-35, for a brief exposition of the four mudrās.

This discussion is followed by a section dealing specifically with Mahāmudrā (pp. 50-62), but only the first piece of this section has direct relevance to the Mahāmudrā doctrine of Gampopa (pp. 50-52). This piece will now be translated and analyzed here. First, Sapaṇ gives a general criticism of the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā doctrine:

> Some meditate on Mahāmudrā, but they are just meditating on a fancied idea. They do not understand Mahāmudrā to be the wisdom that arises from the two stages. Such fools' Mahāmudrā meditation is said mostly to be the cause for being born as an animal. If not so, they will be born in the formless realm or fall into the śrāvaka's cessation of rebirth. Even if they meditate well, it would not transcend Madhyamaka meditation. Although Madhyamaka meditation is fine, it is very difficult to accomplish. As long as the two developments are not perfected, such meditation cannot be completed, and to perfect the two developments is said to require immeasurable aeons.[180]

Sapaṇ here points out that if Mahāmudrā is not the realization produced by practicing the two stages of the Anuttarayoga Tantras, namely the developing stage and the completion stage (Tib. bskyed rim and rdzogs rim), it is mistaken, since it would not be realization. It would therefore have to be a meditation on a concept that is simply fancied[181] to be Mahāmudrā, since conceptuality is the opposite of realization or wisdom in this context. Such meditation would in most cases just be to cultivate one's stupidity by engaging in this mistaken idea imagined to be Mahāmudrā, and that would only result in rebirth as an animal, which is here seen as the embodiment of stupidity. If one were to say that this meditation is not conceptual, there are two possibilities. Firstly, if one were to enter a non-conceptual state by just blocking out thoughts, it would lead to rebirth in 'the formless realm' (Tib. gzugs med khams) within saṃsāra, where one is absorbed into a dull state free of all mental activity. Secondly, if one were to enter a non-conceptual state by realizing the emptiness of conceptuality, one would enter nirvāṇa as it is taught in the Hīnayāna, which is the cessation of

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[180] *sdom gsum rab dbye*, p. 50: "phyag rgya chen po bsgom na yang/ /rtog pa kha 'tshom nyid bsgom gyi/ /rim gnyis las byung ye shes la/ /phyag rgya chen por mi shes so/ /blun po phyag rgya che bsgom pa/ /phal cher dud 'gro'i rgyu ru gsungs/ /min na gzugs med khams su skye/ /yang na nyan thos 'gog par ltung/ /gal te de ni bsgom legs kyang/ /dbu ma'i bsgom las lhag pa med/ /dbu ma'i bsgom de bzang mod kyi/ /'on kyang 'grub pa shin tu dka'/ /ji srid tshogs gnyis ma rdzogs pa/ /de srid bsgom de mthar mi phyin/ /'di yi tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa la/ /bskal pa grangs med dgos par gsungs."

[181] David Jackson translates this expression (Tib. rtog pa kha 'tshom) as 'the closing off of discursive thought' (cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 161). The expression kha 'tshom is not listed in any of the standard dictionaries – not even in *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* – but according to Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel it literally means 'to take the mouth full', which means 'to postulate'. In other words, these practitioners here just cultivate a concept that they postulate or fancy to be Mahāmudrā. I therefore disagree with Jackson's translation on this point.

rebirth in saṃsāra. It should here be understood that none of these states are considered desirable for a follower of the Mahāyāna. Finally, if one were to say that this meditation is a realization of emptiness but that it would not lead to the limited cessation taught in the Hīnayāna, because it is joined with the altruistic motivation of a bodhisattva taught in the Mahāyāna, it would still be nothing but the insight-meditation (Tib. lhag mthong) expounded by the Madhyamaka tradition, which belongs to conventional Mahāyāna.

Sapaṇ admits such insight-meditation to be acceptable, but he points out that according to conventional Mahāyāna, once initial realization has been attained, i.e. the first bhūmi, the attainment of final realization takes three immeasurable aeons (Tib. bskal pa grangs med) (actually defined in the Abhidharma teachings as $3x10^{57}$ years), i.e. indeed an extremely long period of time covering countless rebirths. Such a long time is said in the Mahāyāna sutrās to be required to perfect the two developments of inner richness and wisdom (Tib. bsod nams kyi tshogs and ye shes kyi tshogs). As long as these two developments are not perfected, the insight-meditation cannot be completed. Thus, Sapaṇ rejects any Mahāmudrā that is not taught as the final realization of the Tantras. Sapaṇ then continues with presenting his own view:

> My Mahāmudrā is the self-arisen wisdom acquired through the wisdom of the initiation and the meditation on the two stages. Its realization is accomplished within this life, if one has skill in the methods of secret mantra. The Buddha did not teach any other realization of Mahāmudrā than this. Therefore, if one puts one's trust in Mahāmudrā, one should practice it according to the scriptures of secret mantra.[182]

Sapaṇ points out that only the methods of the Tantras are considered capable of producing realization faster than the three immeasurable aeons mentioned above, namely within a single lifetime if one is skillful in the ways of the Tantras. Thus, having rejected any teaching, where Mahāmudrā is not taught within the frame of the four tantric initiations and their practice, Sapaṇ puts forth his own view: Mahāmudrā is exclusively the final realization produced by tantric initiation and the tantric meditations of the developing and completion stages. When Sapaṇ says that the Buddha did not teach any other kind of Mahāmudrā, he implies that one only finds Mahāmudrā taught in the Tantras and nowhere else. Sapaṇ therefore admonishes that one should practice Mahāmudrā only by following the Anuttarayoga Tantra teaching.

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[182] *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, p. 50: "nged kyi phyag rgya chen po ni/ /dbang las byung ba'i ye shes dang/ /rim pa gnyis kyi ting 'dzin las/ /byung ba'i rang byung ye shes yin/ /'di yi rtogs pa gsang sngags kyi/ /thabs la mkhas na tshe 'dir 'grub/ /de las gzhan du phyag rgya che/ /rtogs pa sangs rgyas kyi ma gsungs/ /des na phyag rgya chen po la/ /mos na gsang sngags gzhung bzhin sgrubs."

If Mahāmudrā strictly belongs to tantric practice, what should one then make of the teachings that say anything to the contrary, namely the Mahāmudrā taught by Gampopa and his followers? Sapaṇ provides his answer in the following piece: such teachings are simply Chinese Ch'an.

> There is, in fact, no difference between the present-day Mahāmudrā and the Chinese tradition of Great Perfection. Only the expressions 'landing from above' and 'climbing from below' have been changed to 'instantaneous' and 'gradual'.[183]

From the context it is clear that with 'present-day Mahāmudrā' Sapaṇ refers to the tradition, where Mahāmudrā is taught outside the tantric context, which is only the Mahāmudrā teaching of Gampopa and his bka' brgyud followers[184]. Sapaṇ thus equals bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā with what he calls the Chinese tradition of Great Perfection (Tib. rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen). What is meant by the phrase 'the Chinese tradition of Great Perfection'? In the following piece of the text, Sapaṇ identifies it with the teaching of an instantaneous approach to enlightenment taught by a Chinese monk, who was refuted by the Indian master Kamalaśīla. The phrase therefore signifies the Chinese Ch'an teaching of hwa shang Mahāyāna (Chi. mo-ho-yen), who arrived in lha sa from the Tibetan-occupied Dunhuang (also spelled Tun-huang) in either 781 or 787 at the invitation of the Tibetan King khri srong lde'u btsan[185].

This use of the word Great Perfection (Tib. rdzogs chen) is peculiar, since it has the obvious connotation of the rdzogs chen meditation system taught in the Tibetan rnying ma and bon traditions. Does Sapaṇ thereby imply that the Tibetan rdzogs chen teaching is equivalent with Chinese Ch'an? The commentaries to *sdom gsum rab dbye* mentioned above provide no clue on this point. Western scholars have presented different opinions about the implication of this phrase. Samten Karmay[186] understood the phrase to imply the Tibetan rdzogs chen, and this opinion was shared by R. M. Davidson[187]. Van der Kuijp[188], however, called this interpretation into question by arguing that the context in which this phrase appears clearly

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[183] *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, p. 50: "da lta'i phyag rgya chen po dang/ /rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen la/ /yas 'bab dang ni mas 'dzegs gnyis/ /rim gyis pa dang cig char bar/ /ming 'dogs bsgyur ba ma gtogs pa/ /don la khyad par dbye ba med."

[184] Van der Kuijp, 1983, p. 102, agrees with this point when he writes: "The context in which this phrase occurs explicitly indicates that certain Bka'-brgyud-pa Mahāmudrā theories seem to, if not reiterate, then at least unwittingly propagate doctrines, which, according to Sa-skya Paṇḍita, bear close resemblences with the Chinese doctrines current in Tibet especially during the eighth century." Cf. also Jackson, 1994, p. 84.

[185] Cf. Tanaka, 1992, p. 65.

[186] Cf. Karmay, 1975, pp. 152-153.

[187] Cf. Davidson, 1981, p. 92.

[188] Van der Kuijp, 1983, p. 102.

deals with placing bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā together with Chinese Ch'an[189]. The point is that if Sapaṇ with this phrase implies Tibetan rdzogs chen, he is actually merely arguing that two of his contemporary traditions, namely bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā and rnying ma/bon po rdzogs chen are equivalent, which is clearly not what he is trying to convey. Thus, by judging from the context it may be concluded that the phrase refers exclusively to Chinese Ch'an. This conclusion does not, however, rule out the Tibetan connotation as something secondary; the phrase is still peculiar as rdzogs chen was never before used as a name for Chinese Buddhism.

Sapaṇ states that the only difference between bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā and Chinese Ch'an is that the phrases 'landing from above' and 'climbing from below' (Tib. yas 'bab and mas 'dzegs) have been changed into 'instantaneous' and 'gradual' (Tib. cig char ba and rim gyis pa). The origin of the first two phrases, 'landing from above' and 'climbing from below', is still unknown[190]. Seen logically, however, these terms should be known to Sapaṇ from earlier historical/philosophical textual sources as terminology used by the Chinese Buddhists to denote the difference between the instantaneous (Chi. tun-chiao) and gradual approaches (Chi. chien-chiao)[191]. These two phrases are not used in the Mahāmudrā texts of Gampopa. The last two terms, instantaneous and gradual, however, occur often in the Mahāmudrā texts of Gampopa. The logical import of Sapaṇ's comparison between these terms is that the originally Chinese terms 'landing from above' and 'climbing from below' were changed into the originally Indian terms, instantaneous and gradual. Sapaṇ thus implies that Gampopa used Indian tantric terminology to cover up the Chinese origin of his teaching.

The logic of Sapaṇ's thinking here is odd, since we nowadays know from the Dunhuang material that instantaneous (Tib. gcig char ba) and gradual (Tib. rim gyis pa), in fact, were used in the eighth-ninth centuries primarily as translations for the Chinese terms *tun* (simultaneous, instantaneous) and *chien* (gradual)[192]. If Sapaṇ knew that these words actually were translations from Chinese, it would make no sense for him to say that the terms 'landing from above' and 'climbing from below' were *changed* into instantaneous and gradual, since

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[189] Cf. also Jackson, 1987, pp. 47-48, where these opinions are mentioned as described here.

[190] Karmay analyzed these expressions and could not find any occurrences in the earlier historical works. He did, however, refer to somewhat similar terms appearing in certain bon po works. Cf. Karmay, 1988, pp. 198-199.

[191] Go ram pa's commentary *rgyal ba'i dgongs gsal*, p. 217, attributes these phrases to hwa shang Mahāyāna, in that it has him say to Kamalaśīla: "*Your* Dharma tradition is like an ape climbing into a treetop, which is why it is called gradual. This Dharma tradition of mine is like a garuda landing in a treetop from the sky, and therefore it is called landing from above or instantaneous." (Tib. "khyed kyi chos lugs ni spreu shing rtser 'dzegs pa dang 'dra bas rim gyis pa zhes bya/ nged kyi chos lugs 'di khyung nam mkha' nas shing rtser babs pa dang 'dra bas/ yas 'bab dang cig car zhes bya'o/ zhes zer ro.") The same is found in Sapaṇ's *thub pa'i dgongs pa rab gsal*. Cf. Roger Jackson, 1982, p. 92.

[192] Cf. Stein , 1971, for an excellent analysis for these terms.

both pairs originate from Chinese. The reason to make such a change in terminology would have to be to hide a Chinese origin of Gampopa's teachings by using Indian terminology.

The point, however, is that the terms instantaneous and gradual also occur in the Indian literature, for example, in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*[193] (cf. Stein, 1971, p. 43), *Abhisamayālaṁkāra*[194], and much of the Indian Tantra and Dohā literature. Indeed, the reason for Sapaṇ's logic seems to be that not only Gampopa but even the sa skya pa themselves use the terms instantaneous and gradual. This can, for example, be seen in go ram pa's commentary to *sdom gsum rab bye*, p. 172, where he distinguishes between two kinds of tantric practitioners called 'less-fortunate gradualists' (Tib. skal dman rim 'jug pa) and 'fortunate quickies' (Tib. skal ldan cig car ba).

Is Sapaṇ saying that the Mahāmudrā of Gampopa is merely similar in meaning to Chinese Ch'an or is he rather saying that the teaching of hwa shang Mahāyāna is the actual origin of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā? The above statement of Sapaṇ hints at his intention, in that the word *changed* (Tib. bsgyur ba) implies that Gampopa's teaching, in fact, *is* the teaching of hwa shang in disguise. In the following piece, Sapaṇ expresses this thought more explicitly by quoting a prophecy the Indian master Śāntarakṣita (8th century) is supposed to have given to the Tibetan King khri srong lde'u btsan (reigned c.754-797):

> The rise of this kind of Dharma-tradition has happened in accordance with the prediction of Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita to King khri srong sde btsan. Now hear my exposition of this prediction. King, here in your country, Tibet, non-Buddhists will not appear, since the master Padmasambhava entrusted the country to the Twelve Guardian Goddesses. However, due to certain circumstances, the Dharma-tradition will split in two. After I have passed away, first a Chinese monk will appear and teach an instantaneous approach called *the omnipotent white*. At that time, invite my student, the great scholar Kamalaśīla, from India. When [Kamalaśīla] has defeated him, you will command: "The faithful should practice in accordance with his Dharma-tradition." Afterwards everything came to pass just as he had said. After the Chinese tradition had been stopped, the gradual Dharma-tradition flourished. Later on, the reign of the King ceased, and merely from the writings of the Chinese abbot, [his tradition reappeared]

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[193] Skt. *ārya Laṅkāvatāra mahayāna sūtra*, Tib. *'phags pa lang kar gshegs pa'i theg pa chen po'i mdo*, sde dge bka' 'gyur no. 107, Peking bka' 'gyur no. 775.

[194] Skt. abhisamayālaṁkāra nāma prajñāpāramiopadeśa kārikā, Tib. *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa*, by Maitreyanātha, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 3786, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 5184, chapter seven *skad cig ma gcig gyis* (sic) *rtogs pa'i skabs*, e.g. "ji ltar skyes bus zo chun rgyud/ /rdog thabs gcig gis bskyod pa na/ /thams cad gcig car 'gul ba ltar/ /skad cig gcig shes de bzhin no."

under the new name Mahāmudrā, keeping its given name secret. Thus, the present-day Mahāmudrā is most probably the Chinese Dharma-tradition.[195]

Thus, by referring to a prediction the Indian master Śāntarakṣita should have given to King khri srong lde'u btsan, Sapaṇ maintains that bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā does not originate with Indian tantric Buddhism but that it is a revival of the Chinese teaching of hwa shang Mahāyāna. He also states that this revival is not supposed to have happened through any oral transmission but rather by using the written teachings of hwa shang that we here suppose to have existed in latter day Tibet. Since Sapaṇ states that King khri srong lde'u btsan should have rejected Chinese Buddhism in Tibet by ordering his people to practice in accordance with the gradual Dharma-tradition of Kamalaśīla, it becomes evident what Sapaṇ wishes to imply by equating Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine with Chinese Ch'an: bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā is anathema that ought to be considered complete heresy. Section 3.4 will provide a further analysis of Sapaṇ's use of this prediction.

Sapaṇ's claim obviously contradicts the common view of the bka' brgyud traditions that their Mahāmudrā originates with the Indian siddhas, in particular the teachers of mar pa, viz. Nāropa and Maitrīpa. In the following piece, Sapaṇ therefore sets out to prove that the Indian masters only taught the tantric Mahāmudrā that Sapaṇ accepts:

> Nāropa and Maitrīpa taught only Mahāmudrā as it is expressed in the Tantras of secret mantra, namely as karmamudrā, dharmamudrā, samayamudrā and Mahāmudrā. Also, the noble Nāgārjuna only taught Mahāmudrā as the four mudrās by saying "If those unfamiliar with karmamudrā do not know the dharmamudrā either, it is impossible for them to realize even the mere name of Mahāmudrā." Also, in the king of Tantras and elsewhere, and in the various great treatises, a Mahāmudrā that is not related to the

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195 *sdom gsum rab dbye*, pp. 50-51: "chos lugs 'di 'dra 'byung ba yang/ /byang chub sems dpa zhi ba 'tshos/ /rgyal po khri srong sde btsan la/ /lungs bstan ji bzhin thog tu bab/ /lung bstan de yang bshad kyis nyon/ /rgyal po khyod kyi bod yul 'dir/ /slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis/ /brtan ma bcu gnyis la gtad pas/ /mu stegs 'byung bar mi 'gyur mod/ /'on kyang rten 'brel 'ga' yi rgyus/ /chos lugs gnyis su 'gro bar 'gyur/ /de yang thog mar nga 'das nas/ /rgya nag dge slong byung nas ni/ /dkar po chig thub ces bya ba/ /cig char ba yi lam ston 'gyur/ /de tshe nga yi slob ma ni/ /mkhas pa chen po ka ma la/ /shi la zhes bya rgya gar nas/ /spyan drongs de yis de sun 'byin/ /de nas de yi chos lugs bzhin/ /dad ldan rnams kyis spyod cig gsung/ /de yis ji skad gsungs pa bzhin/ /phyi nas thams cad bden par gyur/ /rgya nag lugs de nub mdzad nas/ /rim gyis pa yi chos lugs spel/ /phyi nas rgyal khrims nub pa dang/ /rgya nag mkhan po'i gzhung lugs kyi/ /yi ge tsam la brten nas kyang/ /de yi ming 'dogs gsang nas ni/ /phyag rgya chen por ming bsgyur nas/ /da lta'i phyag rgya chen po ni/ /phal cher rgya nag chos lugs yin."

initiations is rejected. First when one has realized the Mahāmudrā wisdom that comes from the initiations should one abandon all identifiable efforts.[196]

Sapaṇ thus makes reference to exactly the same Indian masters that Gampopa and his followers consider the source of their Mahāmudrā teaching, namely Nāropa and Maitrīpa. To add weight to his argument, Sapaṇ also quotes Nāgārjuna, whom all Tibetan traditions consider supreme. Nāgārjuna is also considered by the bka' brgyud traditions as a member of their Indian Mahāmudrā lineage, namely as a student of Saraha[197]. Sapaṇ then states that the king of Tantras, i.e. the Hevajratantra, and the various other Tantras and tantric commentaries do not admit any Mahāmudrā teaching that is not related to the tantric initiations. Finally, Sapaṇ rejects the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā doctrine of abandoning all contrivance to realize the nature of the mind by saying that one should not abandon identifiable efforts before one has accomplished the wisdom of Mahāmudrā by practicing the four initiations. Contrivance (Tib. sprod pa) or identifiable (Tib. mtshan bcas) efforts refers in the tantric context to making use of visualization, mantra and yoga.

To sum up the critique of Sapaṇ, we can draw up three points: 1) Gampopa's Mahāmudrā is to meditate on an idea fancied as Mahāmudrā or, at best, equivalent to Madhyamaka meditation, which requires an extremely long time to accomplish; 2) Gampopa's Mahāmudrā is the Chinese Ch'an tradition of hwa shang Mahāyāna in disguise; 3) Gampopa's Mahāmudrā does not accord with the authentic Indian tradition, where Mahāmudrā is only taught in a tantric context.

3.4. The Ploy of the Bsam Yas Debate

When Sapaṇ compares bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā with the Chinese Ch'an tradition, he is referring to what nowadays has become known as the bsam yas debate or the bsam yas council. A certain tension arose in Tibet in the eighth to ninth centuries between followers of Indian and Chinese Buddhist teachers. Hwa shang Mahāyāna was one of the main exponents of Chinese Buddhism in Tibet at the time[198]. Tibetan sources claim that the tension climaxed in a

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[196] *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, pp. 51-52: "na ro dang ni me tri pa'i/ /phyag rgya chen po gang yin pa/ /de ni las dang chos dang ni/ /dam tshig dang ni phyag rgya che/ /gsang sngags rgyud nas ji skad du/ /gsungs pa de nyid khong bzhed do/ /'phags pa klu sgrub nyid kyis kyang/ /phyag rgya bzhi par 'di skad gsung/ /las kyi phyag rgya mi shes pas/ /chos kyi phyag rgya'ang mi shes na/ /phyag rgya chen po'i ming tsam yang/ /rtogs pa nyid ni mi srid gsung/ /rgyud kyi rgyal po gzhan dang ni/ /bstan bcos chen po gzhan las kyang/ /dbang bskur dag dang ma 'brel ba/ /de la phyag rgya chen po bkag/ /dbang bskur ba las byung ba yi/ /ye shes phyag rgya che rtogs na/ /da gzod mtshan ma dang bcas pa'i/ /'bad rtsol kun la mi ltos so."

[197] Cf. *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i sgom rim gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad zla ba'i 'od zer*, p. 210, and Lhalungpa, 1986, p. 117.

[198] For a description of the influx of Ch'an Buddhism in Tibet, cf. Tanaka, 1992, pp. 62-66.

debate between the Indian and Chinese followers, which should have taken place in the presence of King khri srong lde'u btsan at the bsam yas temple toward the end of the eighth century. The Indian side should have been represented by Kamalaśīla and the Chinese side should have been represented by hwa shang Mahāyāna. According to later Tibetan sources, Kamalaśīla won the debate, the King banned the practice of Chinese Buddhism in Tibet, and hwa shang Mahāyāna then returned to China. However, as we have learned nowadays through the material uncovered in Dunhuang and from what can be learned from early Chinese sources, the later Tibetan descriptions of these events are quite imprecise[199]. In fact, it is even not certain that an actual debate ever took place[200].

The issue in this context is how Sapaṇ employed the story of the bsam yas debate in his critique of bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā. The outline of Sapaṇ's version basically is: during the time of King khri srong lde'u btsan, there was a debate between the Indian and the Chinese Buddhist traditions. The Chinese tradition was known as 'the omnipotent white'. Kamalaśīla, who represented the Indian side, won the debate and Chinese Buddhism was banned in Tibet. However, later on the Chinese 'omnipotent white'-tradition reappeared under the name Mahāmudrā, i.e. the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā tradition. As pointed out above, the implication that Sapaṇ links bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā with the Chinese tradition is that the bka' brgyud tradition is a religious heresy, which was already defeated and banned during the ninth century.

First of all, it is a question to which extent Sapaṇ's paraphrase of the story is historically correct in that it accords with earlier Tibetan sources on the event. This question has already been intensely discussed by Western scholars. In 1982 Roger Jackson published an article[201], where he presented the view that Sapaṇ had twisted the story to employ it in his critique of the contemporary bka' brgyud tradition. He particularly pointed out that the expression 'omnipotent white' (Tib. dkar po chig thub), which he translated as 'the white panacea', does not occur in any earlier sources as a name for the Chinese tradition, such as *sba bzhed*, *sgom pa'i rim pa*[202], etc. On the other hand, 'the omnipotent white' is an expression that occurs occasionally as an analogy in the writings of Gampopa[203]. The omnipotent white is a name for a medicine capable of curing all diseases[204], and thus Gampopa uses it as an analogy for the realization of Mahāmudrā, which is capable of removing all mental obscurations. It is, however, not a central term in his philosophy, and it should also be remembered that Gampopa

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199 For a detailed presentation, cf. Demiéville, 1954, and Tucci, 1958.

200 Cf. Tanaka, 1992, p. 58, and Snellgrove, 1987, pp. 433-436.

201 Cf. Roger Jackson, 1982. In this article Roger Jackson specifically deals with a similar paraphrase of the story written by Sapaṇ in *thub pa'i dgongs pa rab gsal*, but as Jackson also points out himself, the same argumentation applies to the version found in *sdom gsum rab dbye*.

202 Skt. *Bhāvanākrama*, by Kamalaśīla, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 3915-3917, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 5310-5312.

203 Cf. Jackson, 1994, pp. 149-154 for a partial list.

204 Cf. Jackson, 1994, p. 1, and Van der Kuijp, 1986, pp. 149-150.

was educated as a physician in his youth and it is therefore not strange that he used such medical imagery. More importantly, the expression was later adopted by bla ma zhang (1123-1193), a student of Gampopa's nephew dwags po sgom tshul, as the name for his own Mahāmudrā doctrine[205]. Bla ma zhang founded the tshal pa bka' brgyud sect, which as mentioned above was a major contender for political power in the Mongolian Game during Sapaṇ's lifetime[206]. It is therefore obvious to suspect Sapaṇ for some political maneuvering on this point.

This view was, however, later criticized by Leonard van der Kuijp[207] and the same arguments were repeated by David Jackson in his recent book on the subject[208]. The argument used here is that Sapaṇ did twist the story by inserting the expression 'omnipotent white' as a name for the Chinese tradition, because there exists an earlier Tibetan historical source that also uses this expression as a name for the Chinese tradition. The source in question is a history of Buddhism (Tib. chos 'byung) by nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192) entitled *chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*[209], which was notably written before Gampopa became active as a Mahāmudrā teacher. Van der Kuijp also tried to establish that Sapaṇ relied on this history book in his description of the bsam yas debate. The consequence therefore is that we cannot conclude that Sapaṇ twisted the story.

This fact should, however, not make us close our eyes to the way in which Sapaṇ employs the bsam yas debate. In Sapaṇ's presentation the bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā tradition is not considered an authentic Indian origin, but instead he presents it as having a Chinese origin and thereby implies that it is unacceptable. This was the first time that the bsam yas debate had been used to politically attack a contemporary Buddhist tradition. This added a completely new dimension to the myth of the debate, which could possibly help to explain why the later Tibetan historical tradition came to perceive the debate in such a distorted way.

It should also be noted that the Chinese use of the expression 'omnipotent white' and the bka' brgyud use thereof are not necessarily the same[210]. After all, the expression is in both traditions simply used as an analogy and is not a central term. It was only with the appearance of bla ma zhang's Mahāmudrā tradition that the expression received a more central importance. Sapaṇ was thus also the first to imply a connection between the use of this expression by the Chinese and the bka' brgyud traditions. It should be noticed that this use of 'the omnipotent white' is peculiarly similar to Sapaṇ's strange use of the expression 'great perfection' (Tib. rdzogs chen) discussed above.

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[205] Cf. Roger Jackson, 1982, p. 94, and Martin, 1992, who translated bla ma zhang's main Mahāmudrā text.

[206] Cf. Stein, 1972, pp. 76-78.

[207] Cf. Van der Kuijp, 1986.

[208] Cf. Jackson, 1994.

[209] Cf. Meisezahl, 1985, for a reproduction of the text.

[210] This was also pointed out by van der Kuijp. Cf. van der Kuijp, 1986, p. 151.

Although we can speculate about Sapaṇ's motives when writing about the bsam yas debate, we do not reach any conclusive evidence concerning the possible Chinese origin of Gampopa's doctrine. We may say that Sapaṇ simply stated a Chinese origin without providing any real proof of how Gampopa could have obtained a transmission or inspiration of Chinese Ch'an. Let us now turn to the other possible origin of Gampopa's teachings, viz. the Indian Buddhism, and explore in which way his doctrine could possibly have evolved therefrom.

3.5. The Approach of Śākyaśrībhadra

As is evident from the critique of *sdom gsum rab dbye*, Sapaṇ held the view that Mahāmudrā strictly belonged in a tantric context, while Gampopa was of the opinion that Mahāmudrā could also be taught independently of tantric practice. What was the reason for this difference? To ascertain the origin of this difference, we shall first investigate the possible source of Sapaṇ's view. Sapaṇ had two major influences in his life: the sa skya teachings held by his clan and his Indian teacher Śākyaśrībhadra (1127-1225). From which of the two did he acquire his view on Mahāmudrā?

A puzzling fact is that the seventh karma pa, chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506), later included works of Śākyaśrībhadra in his bibliography of Mahāmudrā, which was used as a basis for the recent compilation of Mahāmudrā anthology *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod*[211]. The bka' brgyud followers thus considered Śākyaśrībhadra to also have taught Mahāmudrā besides the epistemological teaching he is known to have taught to Sapaṇ. *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i mdzod* contains four works by Śākyaśrībhadra. Two of these are merely attributed to him, since their colophons state that their stanzas appeared miraculously out of the sky during the funeral of Śākyaśrībhadra[212]. I will therefore not deal with these works here. The third work consists of only two stanzas explaining the inseparability of emptiness and compassion[213]. The fourth work, however, is very interesting, since it contains a detailed teaching on meditation practice, the meaning of which, in fact, resembles the Mahāmudrā teaching of Gampopa.

This text is called *gdam ngag rin chen 'bru dgu* and consists of ten pages[214]. The colophon of the text states clearly that it was written by Śākyaśrībhadra. A date or location is not given. The first four pages explain the preliminary practices. It is said that one should go to a remote place free of distractions, and relax the body and the mind. Next, one should pray to

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211 Cf. *mdzod*, vol. om, p. 5.

212 These two works are *nam mkha' la byon pa'i tshigs su bcad pa* and *chu 'dzin gyi nga ro las byung ba'i yan lag bdun pa*, mdzod, vol. ah, pp. 96-99.

213 Skt. Viśuddhadarśanacaryopadeśa nāma, Tib. *Lta spyod rnam dag gi man ngag*, mdzod, vol. hung, pp. 470-471. Sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2464.

214 *gdam ngag rin chen 'bru dgu*, mdzod, vol. ah, pp. 88-96.

the guru and the yi dam, and make a strong resolution to attain enlightenment. One should then contemplate death, karma and suffering, whereby one produces a sense of renunciation. The main meditation is then explained as follows:

> When one lets every experience just be, accomplishment happens spontaneously without acting. When one perceives the essence of all that arises, the awareness is liberated in itself. When one cuts the trace of movement, the thought and its observer subside in space. Since these three are the nature of one's mind, cultivate them as the main meditation.[215]

This approach of instantaneous enlightenment is then explained in prose in some detail. The expression 'clear light' (Tib. 'od gsal) occurs several times, which indicates that the basis for this teaching is the Tantras, since this word is only used in Cittamatra and Tantra terminology, and here it does not seem to be employed in the Cittamatra way. Another phrase that resembles the teaching of Gampopa very much is "the uncontrived awareness itself is buddha."[216] It is explained that in this practice compassion and wisdom are realized simultaneously (Tib. cig car du zung 'jug tu nyams su blang), like the two wings of a bird. It is also said that emptiness and compassion are perfected as being of one taste (Tib. ro gcig tu). Thus, there is a certain conformity in meaning and terminology between this text of Śākyaśrībhadra and the Mahāmudrā teachings of Gampopa. Gampopa could not have used Śākyaśrībhadra's text, since Śākyaśrībhadra first came to Tibet fifty-one years after Gampopa had died.

It should, however, be clearly emphasized that Śākyaśrībhadra's text nowhere contains the word *Mahāmudrā*. We can therefore not conclude that Śākyaśrībhadra taught Mahāmudrā in the same style as Gampopa, but we can conclude that Śākyaśrībhadra taught a meditative approach that resembles the Mahāmudrā of Gampopa. Thus, it does not seem plausible that Sapaṇ received his negative view of Gampopa's teaching from Śākyaśrībhadra, since he not only criticized Gampopa's use of the word Mahāmudrā but also the entire way of conducting meditation practice[217].

It is, of course, a possibility that this text is a forgery produced by bka' brgyud followers to be used against the criticism of Sapaṇ. A particularly interesting fact is here that this text is not included in the Tibetan canon of Indian treatises, the *bstan 'gyur*, unlike several

[215] *gdam ngag rin chen 'bru dgu*, mdzod, vol. ah, p. 91. "cir snang rang sar gzhag na bya bral lhun gyis grub/ /gang shar ngo bo gzung na rig pa rang sar grol/ /'gyu ba'i rtsad rjes chod na dran rtog dbyings su yal/ /'di gsum rang sems gnas lugs yin pas dngos gzhir bsgom."

[216] *gdam ngag rin chen 'bru dgu*, mdzod vol. ah, pp. 92-93: "ma bcos pa'i rig pa nyid sangs rgyas yin."

[217] David Jackson suggests that Śākyaśrībhadra was negative about bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā, but this is only pure speculation, since he does not give any kind of proof of this. Cf. Jackson, 1994, 68-70.

other texts by Śākyaśrībhadra. There are, however, two facts speaking against this text being such a forgery. Firstly, the text does not contain the word Mahāmudrā, which clearly makes it a very weak defense against Sapaṇ. Secondly, the text was never employed by any of the later defenders of Gampopa's teaching, such as kun mkhyen padma dkar po (1527-1592) or sgam po bkra shis rnam rgyal (1513-1587)[218].

A more detailed study of Śākyaśrībhadra is required to reach any conclusion on its authenticity, but if this text is found to be authentic, it can be concluded that Indian masters also taught an instantaneous approach in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. Śākyaśrībhadra's text may then be seen as a synthesis of the teachings on instantaneous enlightenment found in Tantrism, i.e. Mahāmudrā, with elements of conventional Mahāyāna, such as the preliminary practices mentioned above, the focus on the union of emptiness and compassion, etc. This is exactly the same kind of synthesis that one finds in Gampopa's Mahāmudrā teachings, particularly in his teaching collections (Tib. tshogs chos).

3.6. Maitrīpa - The Point of Departure

Is it possible to pinpoint where Mahāmudrā started to break away from Tantrism and move into a closer union with conventional Mahāyāna? It is known that Indian Buddhism by the eleventh century had entered a synthesizing phase. S. K. Hookham notes:

> Fortunately for Buddhism, the time of these synthesizing developments coincided with the second wave of Tibetan translators and scholars who were reintroducing Buddhism to Tibet in the eleventh century. Thus, the Tibetans were able to preserve not only the work of synthesis already begun but also to build on that work.[219]

To highlight the nature of this synthesis, the anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel describes how the practices of Anuttarayoga Tantra in India became absorbed into the monastic centers at a relatively late point:

> The Kriyā and Caryā . . . probably grew up as an extension of ritual, yogic, and devotional tendencies already present within the Mahāyāna. They would certainly have been the forms that could most easily be absorbed into the ritual life and practice of established monastic communities. If [the archaeologist Nancy] Hock's interpretation is correct, they were an important part of the ritual life and practice of some of these

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[218] Kun mkhyen padma dkar po defended the Mahāmudrā of Gampopa in *phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*, while sgam po bkra shis rnam rgyal did so in *nges don phyag rgya chen po'i sgom rim gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad zla ba'i 'od zer.*

[219] Hookham, 1991, p. 171.

> communities by the eighth and the ninth centuries. The Anuttarayoga Tantra practices, by contrast, seem to have remained outside the monastic context until very late. They remained the preserve of siddha-style practitioners . . . , who seem . . . to have formed small cult-groups of wandering yogins and yoginis. It seems that it was only at the end of the period we are considering, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, that these practices were taken up openly within the monasteries and the large monastic universities that had by then grown up.[220]

Buddhist Tantrism or Vajrayāna began to surface as a subculture in India possibly already in the fourth century AD, and seems to have had two parallel developments since its beginning[221]. On the one hand, there was a ritualistic development of invoking various buddhas and bodhisattvas, which possibly evolved as an extension of conventional Mahāyāna practices found within the Buddhist monasteries. On the other hand, a tantric subculture emerged outside the monastic establishment, which consisted of so-called yogins, tāntrikas, or siddhas, who attempted to attain enlightenment through a number of unconventional techniques often involving sexuality and other things considered taboo within the monasteries. These two developments were later systematized into four classes of Tantra, where the first development was generally reflected in the first two classes, viz. the Kriyā and Caryā Tantras, while the second development is found in the last two classes, viz. the Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras. The anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel explains:

> We can therefore suppose that Buddhist Tantra developed in two parallel contexts. In the monastic context, and perhaps also that of settled urban and village lay communities of religious practitioners, ritual and yogic practices based on the external visualization of deities became more and more important, perhaps from the fourth and fifth centuries onwards . . . This corresponds to Hock's 'Mantrayāna' and to the Kriyā and Caryā Tantras of the later Tibetan tradition. In the other context, small cult-groups of wandering ascetics whose practices involved identification with deities and the *nāḍi-prāṇa* (Tibetan *tsa-lung* (sic)) techniques developed around the same time . . . This pattern drew in part on the already-established practices of tribal and folk shamans. It corresponds to the Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras and to Hock's 'Vajrayāna'.[222]

Mahāmudrā was the zenith of the tantric yogas, and during the tenth and eleventh centuries the tāntrika-subculture gradually merged with the culture of conventional Mahāyāna practiced by the monastic establishment. In the process of this merger the subculture would

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[220] Samuel, 1993, p. 412.

[221] Cf. Samuel, 1993, pp. 411-412.

[222] Samuel, 1993, p. 413.

have to adapt to the culture, and it is conceivable that Mahāmudrā, which as a consequence of being an instantaneous approach did not involve ritual activity, thereby became more strongly emphasized than other more outrageous ritual aspects of the Tantras, such as tantric sex, etc. The Anuttarayoga Tantras, however, only taught the instantaneous approach of Mahāmudrā as the culmination of the tantric yogas, which required the use of karmamudrā, viz. a tantric sexual partner. Thus, prior to this merger, Mahāmudrā was above all taught in the context of the four mudrās, as was indeed maintained by Sapaṇ above[223].

As such sexual practices were irreconcilable with the monastic codex, it was only a matter of time before Tantrism would have to change. Firstly, its taboo-breaking aspects were to become enmeshed in ritual, where these aspects were only expressed symbolically. Secondly, the instantaneous approach of Mahāmudrā was to become separated from its tantric context, which enabled the celibate monk practitioner to meditate on the essence of the Tantras without having to deal with the preceding stages of tantric yoga. Both these developments first became really pronounced in the Tibetan form of Vajrayāna Buddhism. As for the ritual development, Geoffrey Samuel notes:

> A gradual synthesis between the Mantrayāna [i.e. the Kriyā and Caryā Tantras] and Vajrayāna [i.e. Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras] trends developed . . . , and was widely represented by the tenth and eleventh centuries. The differences between the two bodies of material were already lessening at this time, and were to become still weaker in Tibet, where identification with the deity would become common even within theKriyā and Caryā Tantras, and the elaborate ritual of Kriyā and Caryā would be adapted to the Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantra.[224]

The other development of separating Mahāmudrā from its tantric context is exactly what is found in the case of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā teaching. Is it then possible that Sapaṇ's more orthodox Mahāmudrā view derived from an earlier stage of Indian Tantrism than Gampopa's more liberal view? The watershed was the Indian master Maitrīpa (c.1010-1087)[225].

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223 *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i sgom rim gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad zla ba'i 'od zer*, p. 180, argues that the Kālacakra Tantra is an exception to this rule in that it teaches bliss to be innate and not just artificially produced through sexual union with the karmamudrā. This, however, only supports my theory, since the Kālacakra Tantra is considered to be a latecomer among the Anuttarayoga Tantras, in that it possibly first appeared in the twelfth century. Cf. Samuel, 1993, p. 410.

224 Samuel, 1993, p. 413.

225 These dates are given by Roerich in *The Blue Annals* (cf. Roerich, 1949, p. 841-842). The year of birth is his identification of the sheep year (Tib. lug lo) or the dog year (khyi lo), which is all that is stated in the Tibetan

Maitrīpa was a key figure in the process of merging the tāntrika subculture with the culture of conventional Mahāyāna[226]. The Tibetan tradition says that Maitrīpa was a scholar of the Vikramalaśīla monastic center, but that he was expelled from the monastery when he got caught red-handed indulging in tantric practices involving sex and alcohol. Later, he is supposed to have rediscovered the *Ratnagotravibhāga* text in a stupa. He then propagated this text widely, among others to the Kashmirian Sajjana (11th century) and possibly also to Atīśa (982-1054), who were responsible for spreading its teaching to Tibet[227]. This text explains the concept of buddha nature and thus represents an important link between conventional Mahāyāna philosophy and Anuttarayoga Tantra. This text was also important for Gampopa's formulation of Mahāmudrā, as Gampopa said to phag mo gru pa that "the basic text of our Mahāmudrā doctrine is the *Ratnagotravibhāga* composed by the Bhagavat Maitreya."[228] Since Maitrīpa was particularly interested in establishing such a link between the teachings of conventional Mahāyāna and Tantrism, one may, of course, wonder about the astonishing coincidence that exactly Maitrīpa happened to find this text and thus could revive it.

Maitrīpa is also said to have revived the Dohā-teachings of the two siddhas Saraha and Śavaripa after he had obtained their transmission in a vision[229]. Subsequently, Maitrīpa composed a number of works related to the tantric subculture. These works include several commentaries to earlier dohās as well as a cluster of twenty-five independent works known as *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* or *a ma na si ka ra'i chos skor* (see Appendix 2 for a list of these works). The *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* contains much material aiming at synthesizing Tantrism with conventional Mahāyāna philosophy. Thus, it is an important contribution to the process of integrating the tantric subculture into the monastic establishment.

The first eighteen texts of *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* explain a number of Anuttarayoga Tantra concepts in terms of Mahāyāna philosophy, particularly the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nāgārjuna. This discussion also involves several terms related to Mahāmudrā, such as one of the central concepts introduced by Maitrīpa, namely *mental disengagement* (Tib. yid la mi byed pa), which means a state where the mind does not engage in dualistic concepts. Here one also finds teachings that incorporate the concept of buddha-nature (e.g. in *mi phyed pa lnga pa*) and even teachings that in meaning come close to the later Tibetan gzhan stong tradition (e.g. in *de kho na nyid rin po che'i phreng ba*). The most well-known text of the collection is *de kho na nyid bcu pa*, where Maitrīpa typically explains tantric concepts,

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text (cf. *deb sngon*, p. 745). This identification of Maitrīpa's dates is, however, questionable (cf. Tatz, 1987, pp. 697-698).

[226] For a detailed account of Maitrīpa, cf. Tatz, 1987.

[227] Cf. Hookham, 1991, pp. 145-146 and 171-172.

[228] *Deb sngon*, p. 632, Roerich, 1949, p. 724.

[229] Cf. *deb sngon*, p. 745-746, Roerich, 1949, pp. 841-842.

such as clear light (Tib. 'od gsal), through the Madhyamaka philosophy of emptiness. It should, however, be noticed that Maitrīpa nowhere in these first eighteen texts actually uses the word Mahāmudrā, although he several times explains terms related to the Mahāmudrā approach. This can, for example, be seen in the *de kho na nyid rab tu bstan pa*, where he lays out the instantaneous approach to enlightenment and points out that it accords with the Madhyamaka view of Nāgārjuna.

In the last seven texts of the *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*, Maitrīpa explains the details of the Anuttarayoga Tantras, particularly the steps of tantric initiation. The word Mahāmudrā occurs here, but only in the context of the four mudrās. It therefore does not seem as if Maitrīpa directly taught Mahāmudrā independently of the Tantras, but he certainly did begin a trend of combining Mahāmudrā teaching with conventional Mahāyāna philosophy.

The Mahāmudrā texts expounded by Maitrīpa were indeed a source for Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine. Gampopa said to phag mo gru pa, "the texts teaching Mahāmudrā, namely the dohā, the three new teaching-cycles, and so forth . . ."[230] The 'three new teaching-cycles' (Tib. gsar ma skor gsum) refer to the three basic sets of Anuttarayoga Tantra/Mahāmudrā commentaries associated with the spread of new Tantras (Tib. rgyud gsar ma) in Tibet starting from the tenth century and onwards, viz. the *grub pa sde bdun, snying po skor drug*, and *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*. The last two sets of texts, i.e. the *snying po skor drug* and *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*, are both associated with Maitrīpa, since he reintroduced the dohās found in the *snying po skor drug* based on his vision of Śavaripa, and authored the *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* himself as was explained above. The first set of texts, the *grub pa sde bdun*, was, however, already taught in Tibet prior to the activity of Maitrīpa (cf. Appendix 2 for details on translation).

Deb sngon refer to Maitrīpa when defending the Mahāmudrā doctrine of Gampopa, or more specifically, it refers to a commentary to Maitrīpa's *de kho na nyid bcu pa*, which was written by a student of Maitrīpa, Sahajavajra (Tib. lhan cig skyes pa'i rdo rje):

> Now at the time of Mar-pa and Mi-la-ras-pa this understanding of *Mahāmudrā* was ascribed to the *sampannakrama* [i.e. the completion stage], for an awareness corresponding to the inner heat was produced first, and by virtue of this an understanding of *Mahāmudrā* was produced later. Dwags-po Rin-po-che caused an understanding of *Mahāmudrā* to arise also in those beginners who had not received *abhiṣeka* [i.e. initiation], and this is the pāramitā method [i.e. conventional Mahāyāna] . . . On this, though Chos-rje Sa-skya-pa said that the pāramitā method was not to be

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[230] *phag mo gru pa'i zhu lan*, bka' 'bum, text 11, mdzod, vol. kha, p. 74: "do ha dang/ gsar ma skor gsum la sogs pa'i phyag rgya chen po'i gzhung
'di tsho . . ."

called *Mahāmudrā*, since any awareness of *Mahāmudrā* arises solely from *abhiṣeka*, [he was mistaken, and indeed] the ācārya Jñanakīrti says in his *Tattvāvatāra* that even at the stage of an ordinary person, one who has sharp intellect and who, in the pāramitā system, practices *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, since he can understand *Mahāmudrā* properly and with certainty, can attain an irreversible understanding. However, in Sahajavajra's commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* we find: 'The essence is the parāmitās, mantra is a later adjustment. This is called *Mahāmudrā* and is clearly explained as an awareness which understands suchness having three specific features [viz. joy, clarity, and no-thought]. Accordingly, rGod-tshang-pa has explained that the parāmitā method of sGam-po-pa is just what was put forward by Maitrīpa. However it is certain that sGam-po-pa taught his own personal pupils a *Mahāmudrā* whose path is mantra.[231]

Thus, Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine was at least continuing a trend started by Maitrīpa, but how does that relate to the Mahāmudrā view of Sapaṇ? As Sapaṇ's Mahāmudrā view probably did not come from Śākyaśrībhadra, he must have obtained it from the sa skya teachings held by his clan. The main core of these teachings was gathered in India by 'brog mi lotsa ba (992-1074)[232] a little over two hundred years prior to Sapaṇ.

Deb sngon[233] states that 'brog mi was sent to India by the Tibetan master rin chen bzang po (958-1055), when the latter was nearing the age of fifty. This means that 'brog mi went to India around 1008. He stayed there thirteen years, where he studied with Śāntibhadra, Śāntipa and Prajñā-Indraruci. He then returned to Tibet around 1021. This fits with another statement found in *deb sngon*, namely that mar pa lotsa ba (1012-1096) was sent to study Sanskrit under 'brog mi in Tibet, when mar pa had reached the age of fifteen[234], which would then have been in 1026. Later, 'brog mi met with the Indian master Gayādhara in Tibet, who stayed with him for five years at myu gu lung and transmitted the lam 'bras teachings to 'brog mi. The dates of Gayādhara and of his meeting with 'brog mi are unfortunately unknown to me. 'Brog mi taught in turn several students, one of which was 'khon dkon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102), Sapaṇ's forefather, who founded the monastery of sa skya in 1073.

When one compares the dates of the visit of 'brog mi to India, viz. 1008-1021, with the dates of Maitrīpa (c. 1010-1087 or possibly slightly earlier), it is most likely that 'brog mi visited India before Maitrīpa had started the new trend in Mahāmudrā teaching. It is therefore conceivable that Sapaṇ's orthodox Mahāmudrā view derived from a stage of Indian Tantrism, before Mahāmudrā had as of yet come to receive a distinct emphasis by the monastic

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231 *Deb sngon*, pp. 632-633, Roerich, 1949, pp. 724-725. The translation is taken from Broido, 1985, pp. 12-13.

232 These dates are according to Stein, 1972, p. 73 and *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 3217. Snellgrove, 1987, gives the dates as 992-1072 but does not mention his source.

233 *Deb sngon*, pp. 184-189, Roerich, 1949, pp. 205-210.

234 *Deb sngon*, p. 352, Roerich, 1949, p. 399.

establishment, while Gampopa's liberal Mahāmudrā view was associated with the merger of the tantric subculture with the culture of conventional Mahāyāna disseminated by Maitrīpa. As noted above, Maitrīpa does not seem to have directly severed Mahāmudrā from its tantric context but only to have put a stronger emphasis on Mahāmudrā by explaining some of its concepts through Madhyamaka philosophy. It therefore cannot be concluded that Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine derived directly from Maitrīpa, but Maitrīpa may have acted as an inspiration for Gampopa. Conversely, Sapaṇ did have a case in his point, since Mahāmudrā, at least in the beginning, clearly belonged to the Anuttarayoga Tantras.

3.7. Summary

We have thus via the critique of Sapaṇ compared Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine with the classical Indian tradition. It became evident that Gampopa's doctrine differed from the Indian tradition in that he usually did not teach Mahāmudrā in the tantric context of the four mudrās and with prior tantric initiation. Instead, he taught Mahāmudrā in a direct way, where it was combined with conventional Mahāyāna teachings. Sapaṇ therefore suggested that Gampopa's teaching originated with the Chinese Ch'an tradition, and although this has not been conclusively refuted here, we did question this hypothesis. Instead, we looked into the Indian tradition and found (provided that the text in question is authentic) that the Indian teacher Śākyaśrībhadra taught a subitist approached combined with conventional Mahāyāna teachings, which was quite similar to Gampopa's way of teaching. It therefore seems that Gampopa's teaching style was a natural evolution of the developments within Indian Buddhism during the beginning of the eleventh century. We here particularly looked at Maitrīpa and discovered that he began to propagate a certain synthesis between conventional Mahāyāna and Tantrism, which could have been a forerunner of the development seen with Gampopa. It is also likely that Sapaṇ's negative view of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach could have been caused by the fact that the sa skya lineage's tantric teachings were brought from India by 'brog mi lotsa ba before Maitrīpa had become active.

Although we have thus found a possible beginning to the development seen in Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach, we have, however, still not explained what lead him to complete this development. Why was it so urgent for Gampopa to downplay the tantric elements of his transmission and instead propagate this mixture of conventional Mahāyāna and Mahāmudrā? To answer this question, we need now to look into the developments of Tibetan Buddhism in the eleventh to twelfth centuries.

Chapter 4: Synthesis

4.1. Atīśa, the Edifier

The preceding chapter challenged Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine against Vajrayāna practice as represented by the critique of Sapaṇ. Now, it will be contrasted with conventional Mahāyāna as taught by Atīśa.

After a period of decline during the late ninth and early tenth centuries, a new influx of Indian Buddhism began in Tibet towards the end of the tenth century. This revival culminated during the eleventh century with the cooperation between several Indian teachers and Tibetan translators. The Tibetans displayed a strong fascination with the Anuttarayoga Tantras, and they subsequently emphasized the tantric teachings of these texts. There could two reasons for this. Firstly, Tibetan translators had already translated the main corpus of Buddhist Sūtras during the eighth to ninth centuries, and so the translators of the tenth to eleventh centuries were seeking new material. Secondly, the subculture of the Anuttarayoga Tantras was in the meantime becoming mainstream Indian Buddhism and these teachings were thus practiced and expounded by most of the Indian masters whom the Tibetans encountered.

A major shift in focus occurred with the Indian master Atīśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054). Through his edifying activity, he came to exert a major influence, which was probably due to his attempt to bridge some of the inherent contradictions of Indian Buddhism with which the Tibetans were faced.

Indian Buddhism contained two trends that were difficult to unite. On the one hand, there was the conventional Mahāyāna deeply anchored in the monasteries. On the other hand, there were the Tantras, which provided techniques promising quick enlightenment. The Mahāyāna Sūtras had begun to emerge around the second century BC, at a time when Indian Buddhism was becoming institutionalized as a monastic establishment. These scriptures considered the prospect of spiritual realization to be far off in that they preached the attainment of enlightenment to require an almost endless period, i.e. three immeasurable aeons. Around the fourth century AD, a certain optimism emerged in India with the Tantras that promised enlightenment even within a single lifetime. The Tantras, however, appeared as a subculture outside the monastic establishment, and thus the days of the Mahāyāna Sūtras were not over. Instead, the two trends continued to develop as parallels.

Gradually, the tantric subculture became absorbed into the monastic establishment, but it was first around the tenth to eleventh centuries that the most controversial kind of Tantra, i.e. the Anuttarayoga Tantras, started to become part of the monastic life. This integration was not unproblematic. As these Tantras involved sexual techniques, they were fundamentally at odds with the chaste life of the monks. The Tibetans tried to import both aspects of Indian

Buddhism, but they often felt the need to emphasize one aspect above the other. A number of lay-translators, such as 'brog mi or mar pa, focused solely on the Tantras, although a few ordained translators, e.g. rin chen bzang po, tried to combine the two. When Atīśa came to Tibet in the middle of the eleventh century, he initiated a shift in emphasis, which came to have a bearing on the entire Tibetan Buddhism.

Atīśa propagated monkhood to be the proper basis for Buddhism, the Mahāyāna bodhisattva ideal to be its core, and the practice of Tantra to be just one possible method among others. The movement Atīśa initiated became known as bka' gdams pa. Since it consisted mainly of monks, it quickly established itself through a number of monasteries. The other Tibetan traditions gradually followed suit, and Tibetan Buddhism thus became institutionalized. Snellgrove writes:

> Thus it would seem that Atīśa and [his student] 'brom-ston in founding the bKa'-gdams-pa Order were in effect the founders of the whole later Tibetan monastic tradition. Not only the Sa-skya-pa and the bKa'-brgyud-pa Orders, but also the rNying-ma-pas and the Bon-pos inevitably followed suit, when from the fourteenth century onward they too began to establish some celibate religious communities. As for the dGe-lugs-pas, they quite consciously modeled their new communities [in the fourteenth century] on those of the earlier bKa'-gdams-pas, thus claiming to restore a purer monastic way of life, which from their point of view had become muddied by the literal interpretation and the actual practice of many of the tantric rituals imported from India.[235]

Atīśa was a grand master of conventional Mahāyāna but was also well versed in the Tantras[236]. In 1042, he came from India to Tibet by invitation of the Tibetan monk byang chub 'od, who belonged to the ruling family of gu ge in Western Tibet. He spent the following thirteen years in Tibet until his death in dbus in 1054. Atīśa's teaching became epitomized in his text *byang chub lam gyi sgron me*[237], which he wrote at the mtho ling monastery in gu ge shortly after arriving in Tibet[238]. In this text, he explained the stages of Buddhist practice, putting strong emphasis on monkhood and the gradual teachings of conventional Mahāyāna. He stressed the meditation practices of zhi gnas and lhag mthong in accordance with the

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[235] Snellgrove, 1987, p. 493.

[236] For a detailed analysis of biographical data on Atīśa, cf. Eimer, 1979.

[237] Skt. *Bodhipatha-pradīpa*, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 3947, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 5343. For a detailed analysis of the various textual versions and a German translation, cf. Eimer, 1978. For an English translation, cf. Sherburne, 1983.

[238] Cf. Chattopadhyaya, 1967, p. 287, Eimer, 1978, pp. 7-10, and Sherburne, 1983, p. xii,

Madhyamaka philosophy. In the concluding verses of the text, Atīśa laid down his view on tantric practice:

> The Secret and Insight Initiations
> Should not be taken by religious celibates,
> Because it is emphatically forbidden
> In the *Great Tantra of Primal Buddha*.
>
> If those Initiations were taken by one who stays
> In the austerity of a religious celibate,
> It would violate his vow of austerity
> Since he would be practising what is forbidden.
>
> Transgressions would occur which defeat
> The man of religious observance;
> And by his certain fall to bad destinies,
> He could not even succeed [in Mantra practice].
>
> To study and explain all Tantras,
> To make fire offerings, gift worship, and so forth
> Is without error for those who have received the Master Initiation
> And who know reality.[239]

'Religious celibates' (Tib. tshangs par spyod pa) refer to monkhood. The Secret and Insight Initiations are the second and third initiation of the completion stage (rdzogs rim) of Anuttarayoga Tantras. Atīśa thus prohibited monks from taking the second and third initiations, the practice of which involves jñānamudrā and karmamudrā. Due to their use of sexuality, he considered them unsuitable for celibate monks. The last verse explains the tantric practices that monks are allowed to engage in, viz. to study and explain all the Tantras, to make fire offerings, gift worship, and the like. He thus limited the tantric practice to intellectual study and some of its ritual parts only.

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[239] The translation of the first three verses is taken from Sherburne, 1983, p. 12, while the translation of the last verse is my own as I disagree with Sherburne's interpretation on grammatical reasons that are mentioned below. I likewise disagree with Eimer's translation of this last verse, cf. Eimer, 1978, pp. 138-139. *Byang chub lam gyi sgron me,* p. 14: "dang po'i sangs rgas rgyud chen las/ /rab tu 'bad pas bkag pa'i phyir/ /gsang ba shes rab dbang bskur ni/ /tshang par spyod pas blang mi bya/ /gal te dbang bskur de 'dzin na/ /tshang spyod dka' thub la gnas pas/ /bkag pa spyad par gyur pa'i phyir/ /dka' thub sdom pa de nyams te/ /brtul zhugs can de pham pa yi/ /ltung ba dag ni 'byung 'gyur zhing/ /de ni ngan song nges ltung bas/ /grub pa nam yang yod ma yin/ /rgyud kun nyan dang 'chad pa dang/ /sbyin sreg mchod sbyin sogs byed pa/ /slob dpon dbang bskur rnyed 'gyur zhing/ /de nyid rig la nyes pa med."

The Master Initiation (Tib. slob dpon dbang bskur) refers to the final stage of the first initiation, the Vase Initiation (Tib. bum dbang). The first qualification for engaging in these tantric rituals is thus that one must have received the first initiation, i.e. the complete Vase Initiation. As Atīśa points out in his own commentary to the text[240], this means that one does not need to take or practice the controversial second and third initiations to engage in these rituals, which only belong to the developing stage (Tib. bskyed rim)[241]. 'To know reality' means that one has achieved an experience of emptiness, which is associated with the Path of Integration (Tib. sbyor lam)[242]. The import of this qualification is that one can only engage in such tantric rituals if one has achieved an experience of emptiness. Atīśa's stance on tantric practice therefore was that monks are allowed to practice only the developing stage, and it is a provision that they have received the complete Vase Initiation and that they already have an experience of emptiness, which consequently is first to be produced through conventional Mahāyāna practice; monks are not allowed to proceed into the practices of the completion stage.

There are some modern scholars, who have suggested that the last line of the last verse quoted above should separated from the first three lines, so that the last line would read: "For those knowing reality, there is no fault" [243]. The implication of this interpretation would be that if a monk had gained an experience of emptiness, he could proceed to take and practice the second and third initiations. This interpretation is, however, not possible because there would then be no verb (i.e. 'is without error', Tib. nyes pa med) for the first three lines, and the verse would thus be meaningless[244]. Although this interpretation would ease Atīśa's stance somewhat, it is not an option.

This prohibition was obviously a severe limitation to tantric practice, which must have put the bka' gdams pas in square opposition to the tāntrikas. *Deb sngon* illustrates this point with the following exchange, which Gampopa supposedly had with mi la ras pa when they met in 1109:

> [Gampopa] requested: "Please, give me the profound instructions", [to which mi la ras pa] responded, "Have you received initiation?" [Gampopa] answered: "I have received many initiations, such as the rin chen rgyan drug, bde mchog, and others, from mar yul blo ldan. I also listened to many expositions of the bka' gdams instructions in Northern

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[240] Skt. *Bodhimārga pradīpa pañjikā nāma*, Tib. *byang chub lam gyi sgron me'i dka' 'grel,* sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 3948, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 5344. Eimer points out that some Tibetans doubt the authenticity of this work, cf. Eimer, 1978, p. 46, note 2.

[241] Cf. Sherburne 1983, pp. 177-179.

[242] Ibid.

[243] Cf. Samuel, 1993, p. 471, and Sherburne, 1983, pp. 177-179.

[244] I am indebted to Marianne Sørensen for making this grammatical observation.

dbu ru. I have stayed in samādhi for thirteen consecutive days." [Mi la ras pa] emitted a loud laugh "Ha, ha!" and said: "The samādhi of the gods of the form and formless realms, who are able to meditate throughout an entire aeon, is better than your samādhi, but it is of no benefit to enlightenment. It is similar to sand, which will never become oil when pounded. The bka' gdams pas have instructions (Tib. gdams ngag), but they have no personal advises (man ngag). Because a demon penetrated the heart of Tibet, Atīśa was not allowed to explain the secret Mantrayāna. If he would have been allowed to do so, by now Tibet would have been filled by siddhas! The bka' gdams pa's developing stage consists only of lone male deities and their completion stage is only a dissolving of the world and its inhabitants into clear light. Now you should meditate on my *gtum mo a thung*."[245]

Atīśa's view on Tantra is quite far from the integration of the Anuttarayoga Tantras and conventional Mahāyāna begun in India by Maitrīpa probably just a decade or two before Atīśa's arrival in Tibet in 1042[246]. Maitrīpa had attempted a synthesis by joining tantric concepts with explanations based on conventional Mahāyāna philosophy and also by putting a stronger emphasis on the non-ritual, non-sexual aspects of the Tantras, viz. the Mahāmudrā. He had, however, never emphasized monkhood, etc. This was perhaps due to that Maitrīpa belonged to the tāntrika subculture and not to the monastic establishment, from which he had been expelled during his youth[247]. Atīśa, on the other hand, belonged to the monastic establishment and was a staunch defender of its virtues. Subsequently, during his Tibetan exodus Atīśa stressed monkhood and the conventional Mahāyāna teachings and prohibited monks from practicing the central elements of the Anuttarayoga Tantras. Thus, not surprisingly

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[245] *Deb sngon,* p. 396-397, Roerich, 1949, pp. 455-456.

[246] In *byang chub lam gyi sgron me'i dka' 'grel*, Atīśa quotes a text entitled *dbang bskur ba nges par bstan pa* written by an Indian teacher named Avadhūtipa Paiṇḍāpatika (Tib. ya ba di pa bsod snyoms pa)(cf. *byang chub lam gyi sgron me'i dka' 'grel*, pp. 243-246, and Sherburne, 1983, pp. 176-177). This quotation lends strong support to the view of Atīśa that monks should not engage in the second and third initiations, and, in fact, goes so far as to say that even non-celibate practitioners ought not to engage in these initiations. Both Chattopadhyaya (1967, p. 74) and Sherburne (1983, pp. 176-177, note 30 and 32) suggest that this Avadhūtipa refers to Maitrīpa, who often wrote under the name Avadhūtipa Advayavajra. Maitrīpa did write a text with this title (which is the twenty-fourth text of the *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*, see Appendix 2), and the Tibetan bstan 'gyur contains no other text by the same title. There is only one problem: Maitrīpa's text contains nothing that even comes close to the quotation provided by Atīśa. In fact, Maitrīpa's text rather advocates the practice of the four mudrās and provides detailed descriptions of the sexual techniques involved. I therefore do not think that this Avadhūtipa refers to Maitrīpa. Again, one may consider the possibility that this text by Atīśa is not authentic (cf. Eimer, 1978, p. 46, note 2).

[247] According to the Tibetan tradition, he was expelled. According to Tatz, he left the monastic life voluntarily after having a vision of Avalokiteśvara (cf. Tatz, 1987, pp. 700-701).

the combination of Tantra and conventional Mahāyāna that Atīśa propagated in Tibet more represented the way in which Tantra was viewed from within the monastic establishment than how it was viewed within the tantric subculture that existed outside the monasteries. Atīśa's combination of Sūtra and Tantra was therefore both a shift in emphasis for the Tibetans but also a limitation.

In fact, Atīśa deadlocked tantric practice. If one was to practice Buddhism, monkhood was stressed, but monks could not engage in tantric practice other than ritual offerings. Thus, they could not practice the four mudrās, whereby the experience of emptiness, i.e. Mahāmudrā, was to be reached according to the Tantras (cf. here to the Mahāmudrā critique by Sapaṇ, who emphasized the practice of the four mudrās). The monks were therefore only left with the conventional Mahāyāna practices of zhi gnas and lhag mthong to gain the experience of emptiness. The one to break this deadlock was, in fact, Gampopa, who with his Mahāmudrā doctrine found a solution to the problem.

4.2. The Division Unravels

Gampopa was himself confronted with contrasts of the conventional Mahāyāna of the monastic establishment and the sexually related techniques of the tāntrika subculture, but once he started to teach his own students, he introduced a novelty that made a synthesis of these two streams possible.

Gampopa was clearly an insider of the monastic bka' gdams pa movement. After becoming a bka' gdams pa monk at the age of twenty-five, he spent the next five years of his life studying and practicing their doctrine with some of the most well-known bka' gdams pa teachers of his day. He had great success in his practice and accomplished the meditations he learned, but still, at the age of thirty, he decided to leave his teachers behind to go to learn from one of the most famous Tibetan tāntrikas of his day, the yogin mi la ras pa. Gampopa did, however, not abandon his monastic ordination but remained a monk throughout his life. He thus attempted to bridge the lifestyle of a monk with that of a tāntrika.

As mi la ras pa and Gampopa met, mi la ras pa immediately set Gampopa to practice the tantric yogas of the second and third initiation, particularly the practice of inner heat (Tib. gtum mo) (cf. *deb sngon* quotation above). After spending eleven months with mi la ras pa, Gampopa returned to Central Tibet, where he practiced meditation in solitude for eleven years. In 1121, he went to the sgam po mountain in dwags po, where he settled. As a number of students came to study and practice under him, his settlement gradually developed into the first bka' brgyud monastery. Most of Gampopa's students were bka' gdams pa monks, and several of them went on to found monasteries and bka' brgyud sub-sects of their own[248]. On the one

[248] Cf. *deb sngon*, pp. 402-633, and Roerich, 1949, pp. 462-725.

hand, the tāntrika tradition of mi la ras pa thus became institutionalized as a monastic tradition under Gampopa. On the other hand, the bka' gdams pa monks following Gampopa adopted his new teaching style, which made wider use of tantric teachings than had been the case with the original bka' gdams pa tradition founded by Atīśa. The outcome was the bka' brgyud lineage, as Gampopa's followers came to be styled, whose teachings offered a union of Tantrism and conventional Mahāyāna.

From the collected works of Gampopa, we can see a certain pattern in his teaching. As a basis, he gave the conventional Mahāyāna teachings that he had learned from his bka' gdams pa masters, such as explanations on impermanence, karma, suffering and bodhicitta. These teachings are, for example, epitomized in his *dwags po thar rgyan*. This basis he combined with Mahāmudrā instructions given directly without tantric initiation, etc. Thus, he did not reserve Mahāmudrā for the most advanced stage of tantric practice, but he taught it openly to all his students. As the students did not approach the Mahāmudrā experience through the tantric techniques, he taught them instead to gain an experience thereof by meditating on the teacher and his blessing (Skt. guru yoga, Tib. bla ma'i rnal 'byor). Such a meditation on the teacher is a semi-tantric practice, but it does not involve any sexual elements. In this way, Gampopa enabled his followers to practice the essence of the Tantras without having to engage in the tantric techniques that were prohibited by Atīśa. To a small selection of close students, Gampopa did, however, also impart the full tantric teachings, namely the various yogas associated with the second and third initiations.

Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach thus offered a way to practice the Tantras while bypassing the more controversial parts of its practice. In this way, Gampopa managed to follow Atīśa's view at least partly, but at the same time to break the deadlock on tantric practice that Atīśa had caused. Gampopa's Mahāmudrā thus served to unravel the division between conventional Mahāyāna and Tantra, and offered an alternative for anyone wanting to practice on the basis of both. This Mahāmudrā doctrine became the cornerstone of the bka' brgyud lineage as it allowed the practitioners to integrate Tantrism into the monastic life. The bka' brgyud tradition subsequently developed primarily as a monastic tradition.

Later bka' brgyud writers on Mahāmudrā all followed the doctrine of Gampopa as a standard, although they often tried to incorporate further elements from either Tantrism or conventional Mahāyāna. For example, one finds a number of Mahāmudrā texts that sought to integrate the zhi gnas / lhag mthong teachings of conventional Mahāyāna with Mahāmudrā. Although this may be justified on the basis of Gampopa's teaching, this is clearly a later development. There are many examples of such works, in particular the great sixteenth century writers on Mahāmudrā, such as dwags po bkra shis rnam rgyal (1513-1587), kun mkhyen padma dkar po (1527-1592), and the ninth karma pa, dbang phyug rdo rje (1556-1603).

As was shown in the previous chapter, Sapaṇ later criticized Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach for being an innovation, which did not correspond to the Indian tantric tradition. With the present analysis of the conditions under which Gampopa developed his teaching, it has been shown that Gampopa, in fact, tried not to diverge from the Indian Buddhist heritage but rather to integrate the two opposing cultures within it. Although Gampopa's doctrine may thus be called a novelty, it would be more accurate to see it as a synthesis.

4.3. The Divine Gampopa

Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach allowed the bka' brgyud lineage to develop into a monastic institution, whereas Gampopa's own tantric teacher, mi la ras pa, had been the center of a group of carefree fellows practicing tantric yoga in the wilderness. Since the bka' brgyud tradition thereby became much more established with monasteries serving as socio-economic bases for the sect, the consequence was that the former non-celibate tāntrika style of practice quickly became minimal within this tradition. In other words, soon most bka' brgyud followers were monks.

Gampopa was originally a bka' gdams pa monk and as mentioned most of his students were likewise monks that belonged to this sect. The original bka' gdams pa tradition did, however, not subside but continued to exist side by side with the new bka' brgyud tradition. It is thus a question how the monks that remained faithful to the bka' gdams pa tradition reacted to the diverged monks that turned to the bka' brgyud tradition.

The textual sources mention an early criticism of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā tradition, but this criticism seems to have originated with scholars of the gsang phu ne'u thog scholastic center[249], which belonged to the tradition of rngog lotsa ba, rather than to have come directly from the bka' gdams pa party. It is, however, very possible that the bka' brgyud monks felt a certain pressure from bka' gdams pa sect. To prove that such a pressure existed, I shall cite the legend of Candraprabhakumāra.

The biographies of Gampopa mention that he was a reincarnation of the bodhisattva Young Moonlight (Skt. Candraprabhakumāra, Tib. zla 'od gzhon nu)[250]. The name of this bodhisattva also occurs a several times in the collected works of Gampopa, e.g. in the title of *mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma* by bsgom pa legs mdzes. Since several different texts written by the students of Gampopa independently mention this name, it is probable that the Young Moonlight legend already got associated with Gampopa during his lifetime or shortly thereafter. *Deb sngon* mentions that rgyal ba yang dgon pa (1213-

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[249] Cf. Jackson, 1994, pp. 56-58.

[250] Cf. *chos kyi rje dpal ldan sgam po pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che khyab snyan pa'i ba dan thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyi mchog*, bka' 'bum, text 3, vol. 1, pp. 45-120, or *deb sngon*, pp. 393-394, Roerich, 1949, pp. 451-452.

1258) should have stated Gampopa to be an incarnation of Young Moonlight[251], but since the name occurs in so many titles and colophons of the writings of Gampopa's own students, it is probable that this legend had already been associated with Gampopa earlier.

The very last story in the *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho* collection of bka' brgyud songs and stories is a story called *rje sgam po pa dang khams pa mi gsum gyi zhu lan sho mo yar shog gi mgur*[252]. It is a delightful story about how three of Gampopa's closest students, viz. khams pa rdor rgyal (a.k.a. phag mo gru pa[253]), dbu se (a.k.a. dus gsum mkhyen pa, the first karma pa), and gsal stong sho sgom, were expelled from Gampopa's monastery at dwags lha sgam po by the disciplinarian monk rtags brgyad for celebrating a tantric feast with drinking and singing in the night. When Gampopa learned of what had happened, he ran after them to bring them back. Hookham quotes this story as an example of the inevitable tension between Tantrism and monasticism[254]. This story, however, has at least one controversial point, namely the verse of a song sung by Gampopa to the three party makers, which says:

> Many births ago we had a profound karmic connection. In the presence of the Lord Sambuddha, the Bhagavat, the protector Śākyamuni, when I was the ever youthful Candraprabha, I requested and was granted the Samādhirājasūtra.[255]

What is remarkable with this verse is that it puts the claim of being Young Moonlight into the mouth of Gampopa himself, which is not found in any other source. Thus, if this story would reflect an actual statement by Gampopa, it would be quite remarkable. It is, however, difficult to accept the authenticity of this story, since it is related by no other source available to me. Also, khams pa dbu se joined Gampopa's monastery in 1139 and quickly became one of his most renowned students. Phag mo gru pa, on the other hand, first came to Gampopa's monastery twelve years later in 1151, two years before Gampopa died. It is therefore unlikely that dbu se and phag gru should be expelled together from the monastery. The exact origin of the association of Young Moonlight with Gampopa is therefore not clear.

The legend of Young Moonlight is found in the thirty-sixth chapter of the Samādhirājasūtra[256]. In this Sūtra, Buddha Śākyamuni tells a classical tragedy that shows how

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[251] *Deb sngon*, p. 393, Roerich, 1949, p. 451.

[252] *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*, pp. 134a-138b, and Trungpa, 1980, pp. 275-282.

[253] according to Trungpa, 1980, p. 333

[254] Hookham, 1991, p. 145.

[255] The translation is taken from Trungpa, 1980, pp. 277-278. *bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*, p. 136b: sngon skye ba mang po'i gong rol nas/ /las 'brel pa zab mo 'di ltar yod/ /rje rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das/ /mgon shakya thub pa'i spyan snga ru/ /bdag zla 'od gzhon nur gyur pa'i tshe/ /mdo ting 'dzin rgyal po zhus shing gnang/.

[256] Skt. *Ārya Sarvadharma Svabhāva Samatā Vipañcita Samādhirāja Nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra*, Tib. *'phags pa chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin mnyam pa nyid rnam par spros pa ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po zhes bya ba*

much a bodhisattva is willing to undergo to benefit others. The hero of the epic is the bodhisattva Pretty Moon Flower (Tib. me tog zla mdzes). In some ancient time, the Dharma taught by a previous buddha was flourishing. After some time, however, it was neglected and finally disappeared. Subsequently, there was much suffering among the people of the kingdom. The bodhisattva Pretty Moon Flower was staying in a forest with a group of good Dharma practitioners. When he learned that the Dharma had disappeared, he set out to restore it. Having arriving in the kingdom, he taught the Dharma and enlightened many people with his teachings. After a week he proceeded to the king's court to teach there. The whole entourage of the king were overwhelmed by his brilliance and paid their respects to him. At that moment, the king happened to come by. He became angry with this popular newcomer and ordered that Pretty Moon Flower should be executed. After the bodhisattva was killed, many special omens appeared. In particular, the bodhisattva's corpse emitted light and did not decompose. This made the king realize that the bodhisattva was indeed enlightened, and he painfully regretted his mistake. As he feared to be reborn in hell, he conducted a special funeral in the honor of the bodhisattva. Thereafter, the king renounced his kingdom and set out to practice the Dharma. In this way, Pretty Moon Flower sacrificed his own life for the Dharma and the welfare of others without concern for himself.

Buddha Śākyamuni then told that at that time he was himself the king, while the bodhisattva Pretty Moon Flower now had become reborn as the bodhisattva Young Moonlight, who was present in the audience at this occasion. The Buddha prophesized that Young Moonlight later would be reborn as a physician monk (Tib. dge slong 'tsho byed), at which point he would spread the meditation teachings of this sūtra[257].

To associate this legend of Young Moonlight with Gampopa meant that his status was raised to the divine, since he would be the reincarnation of an enlightened bodhisattva. Divine status is not unusual in the Tibetan heritage. This is, in fact, a particular trait of Vajrayāna Buddhism.

In pre-Vajrayāna Buddhism the divine was transcendent, since it was associated with the deceased Buddha. With the development of Mahāyāna, the divine was seen as the all-pervading dharmakāya and its manifestations of innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas. This line of thought was taken so far that even each atom was said to contain a pure, enlightened realm filled with buddhas and bodhisattvas. Nevertheless, the divine was still transcendent, because it usually was not identified with any living person. The status of the divine changed to being immanent with the arising of Vajrayāna, where the Guru was seen as the actual embodiment of all buddhas and bodhisattvas. Vajrayāna biographies (Tib. rnam thar) therefore

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theg pa chen po'i mdo, sde dge bka' 'gyur no. 127, Peking bka' 'gyur no. 795, chapter 36, Tib. *me tog zla mdzes kyi le'u*.

[257] For a more detailed paraphrase in English of this story see Thrangu, 1994, pp. 127-130.

not only describe the life of the teacher, but rather tell about a physical unfolding of the divine. One thus often comes across descriptions belonging to the fantastic. For example, many teachers are said not to have undergone a normal physical death, but instead to have attained the 'rainbow body' (Tib. 'ja' lus) where they simply dissolve into space or travel to magical realms, so-called pure lands, without leaving a physical body behind.

The association of the Young Moonlight legend with Gampopa is thus nothing unusual. In fact, this association should particularly be seen in the light of Gampopa's emphasis on guru yoga, where one meditates on the teacher as divine to discover the divine in oneself. Thus, one should here not ask the tedious question whether these fantastic stories are true or not, since that would be to miss the point. Rather, the point is that they *ought* to be true. Oscar Wilde pointed out the principle at work here:

> Art, breaking from the prison-house of realism, will run to greet [the cultured and fascinating liar], and will kiss his false, beautiful lips, knowing that he alone is in possession of the great secret of all her manifestations, the secret that truth is entirely and absolutely a matter of style; while life – poor, probable, uninteresting human life – tired of repeating herself for the benefit of Mr. Herbert Spencer, scientific historians, and the compilers of statistics in general, will follow meekly after him, and try to reproduce, in her own simple and untutored way, some of the marvels of which he talks.[258]

In other words, such stories generally serve the purpose of inspiring the practitioner to reach for the stars. We may therefore just leave the Young Moonlight legend as an inspiring tale told to Gampopa's disciples.

Our mission here was, however, to see whether we could detect any pressure on the bka' brgyud monks to justify themselves in front of their fellow bka' gdams pa brethren, and it turns out that in this particular case, the association of this legend with Gampopa probably had a hidden purpose as well. Po to ba (1031-1105), one of major proponents of the bka' gdams pa movement, used to underline his strict adherence to conventional Mahāyāna by saying:

> "The so-called Mahāmudrā agrees in meaning with the Samādhirājasūtra, but we should neither deprecate nor practice it." Saying so, [po to ba] held in high esteem the doctrine of Atīśa only.[259]

After Atīśa died in 1054, the bka' gdams pa movement was carried on by his main student 'brom ston (1005-1064). He, in turn, had three main disciples, often called the three

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258 Wilde, 1889, in Adams, 1992, p. 664.

259 *Deb sngon*, p. 240, Roerich, 1949, pp. 268-269.

brothers (sku mched gsum): phu chung ba (1031-1106), spyan snga ba (1038-1103), and the above mentioned po to ba. Considering the dates of po to ba, it is clear that his use of the word Mahāmudrā was not referring to the doctrine of Gampopa, which could first have appeared after Gampopa started teaching at sgam po in 1121. Instead, po to ba was either referring to the Mahāmudrā doctrine of Maitrīpa spread in Tibet by the Indian master Vajrapāṇi (Tib. rgya gar phyag na) during the 1070's or perhaps he made a general reference to the Mahāmudrā taught in the Tantras. Po to ba thus compared Mahāmudrā with the meditation teachings of the Samādhirājasūtra, which he probably did so as not to deny the authenticity of Mahāmudrā. He then stated that the bka' gdams pa followers should neither speak ill of Mahāmudrā nor practice it, but simply follow the doctrine of Atīśa.

It is very conceivable that the students of Gampopa or perhaps even Gampopa himself used this statement of po to ba to their own advantage. By declaring Gampopa to be the physician monk prophesized in this Sūtra to be the one to spread its teachings in the future, Gampopa obtained an unquestionable authority. Having gained this status, it would certainly be difficult to criticize Gampopa's doctrine and the bka' gdams pa monks who followed it, particularly since the Samādhirājasūtra belonged to the corpus of Mahāyāna texts. On the other hand, it would be difficult to deny the association between this Sūtra and the Mahāmudrā doctrine, since it had been directly declared by po to ba, a forefather of the bka' gdams pas. In this way, the breakaway bka' gdams pa monks, who followed the newly formed bka' brgyud, could defend their theories against the established bka' gdams pa movement. If my interpretation of the bka' brgyud usage of the Young Moonlight legend is correct, it indicates the pressure the bka' brgyud monks must have felt to justify themselves. One can thus distinguish a double usage of this legend: on the one hand, it is used as a religiously inspiring tale, which gives Gampopa a divine status in the eyes of his followers; but, on the other hand, it is used as a strong defense against possible critics from the bka' gdams pa sect. The story may thus tell us a bit about the religious development after Gampopa, and the social interrelation between the different traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Once the bka' brgyud lineage had been established with its new unique blend of Tantra and conventional Mahāyāna incorporated in its Mahāmudrā doctrine, it flourished throughout Tibet forming several subsects, each having its own power base in the form of a monastic center. The cause of its success may very well have been Gampopa's Mahāmudrā approach that offered the Tibetans a viable synthesis of Tantra and monasticism. There is no doubt that all the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism had to come up with some kind of solution to the problem of integrating tantric practice with the celibate monastic life. This is evident from the result: the present-day Tibetan religious traditions are all characterized by a typical blend of monasticism and Tantrism.

Conclusion

If we now look back at the preceding chapters, we can see that four things have been accomplished with this research paper. Firstly, we now have an overview of the literary works contained in *dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum*. Secondly, we have an introduction to the Mahāmudrā teaching of Gampopa. Thirdly, we have an analysis of Sapaṇ's Mahāmudrā critique seen from the perspective of Gampopa's teaching. Fourthly, we have an analysis of the relationship to tantric practice found within the early bka' gdams pa and bka' brgyud traditions.

The overview of the literary works contained in *dwags po lha rje'i bka' 'bum* was given in chapter one. This chapter began with a brief biography of Gampopa, which did not provide any new data on Gampopa that are not found in *The Blue Annals* (Tib. *deb sngon*) or the introduction in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (Tib. *dwags po thar rgyan*). The presentation of the biographical sources on Gampopa was, however, the first of its kind in Western scholarship.

We then moved into the survey of *bka' 'bum*. First of all, the different publications of this collection were mentioned, and with the overview given in Appendix A it should thereby be easy for future tibetologists to acquire texts from the collection. The textual material was divided into seven categories: biographies, teaching collections, dialogues, tantric instructions, Mahāmudrā instructions, miscellaneous works, and Mahāyāna works. Since these texts provide the main sources for any study dealing with Gampopa, a general overview of the contents of each text was given. Earlier studies have made reference to one of these texts or another, but a complete outline has never been attempted before. As the *bka' 'bum* collection constitutes the reference point of my entire thesis, this section should be seen as a presentation of my research data.

With this outline, we acquired a general picture of the different layers in Gampopa's teaching. Four main elements could here be distinguished. The large sections dealing with conventional Mahāyāna concepts, particularly motivational teachings explaining impermanence, compassion, etc., represent the first element. The second element is seen in the sections giving tantric instruction on the six doctrines of Nāropa. The third element is the Mahāmudrā instructions, which Gampopa taught separately from the tantric instructions. Finally, there was a fourth element, where Gampopa gave comparisons between conventional Mahāyāna, Tantra, and Mahāmudrā.

An important observation concerned the authorship of these texts. It was pointed out that the majority of the texts in *bka' 'bum* were authored by Gampopa's students and not by himself. I gave the suggestion that, in fact, only two texts were directly authored by Gampopa,

namely *dwags po thar rgyan* and *zhal gdams lam mchog rin po che'i phreng ba*[260]. This was based on the fact that it is only in these two texts that Gampopa states himself as the author using his monastic name, *bsod nams rin chen*. The authorship of a number of the *bka' 'bum* texts still remains unclear.

The second chapter gave an introduction to the Mahāmudrā teaching of Gampopa, which was based on the texts in *bka' 'bum*. So far, Western scholarship has only seen brief descriptions of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine, and a complete explanation based on primary sources has not been attempted before. It was first of all shown that Gampopa taught Mahāmudrā outside a tantric context as an open teaching that was probably given to all his students. The Mahāmudrā view was that the enlightened nature is innate in the mind, i.e. the buddha nature. To discover this nature, one should first rely on the teacher's blessing to achieve a feel for it. Once this feel has been attained, one should rest directly in this nature without any contrivance. The result is a realization of the nature of the mind, whereby one becomes free of all hopes and fears.

It was pointed out that the unique point in Gampopa's approach is the way in which this realization is approached. By relying first on the teacher's blessing and thereafter on uncontrived meditation, where one rests directly in an experience of the nature of the mind, one can practice the highest level of the Anuttarayoga Tantras, the fourth initiation of Mahāmudrā, without having to rely on the usual tantric techniques of the second and third initiation. This is the key-point that cuts to the very bone of Gampopa's teaching.

The third chapter contrasted Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine with the classical tantric approach, here represented by sa skya paṇḍita. Sapaṇ's critique of Gampopa's Mahāmudrā pointed out that Gampopa's teaching did not conform with standard Indian tantric practice. The reason was that it did not rely on the sexual techniques of the four mudrās to approach the experience of Mahāmudrā. Sapaṇ therefore suggested that it had to be a revival of the Chinese Ch'an teachings which were banned in Tibet during the ninth century. Sapaṇ's critique has already been analyzed by David Jackson (1994), who primarily did so from the point of view of Sapaṇ. Besides showing certain points on which I disagree with Jackson, I have primarily made my analysis from the point of view of Gampopa's teaching, since his texts have been my reference point.

It seems unlikely that bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā should originate with Chinese Ch'an, and Sapaṇ also did not provide any kind of evidence for his hypothesis. In fact, this was rather a way to accuse the bka' brgyud tradition of heresy, and thus Sapaṇ was the first in Tibet to use Chinese Ch'an as a naughty word against another contemporary religious tradition.

From there, we moved on to look for a possible origin of the difference in Mahāmudrā practice between Gampopa and Sapaṇ. First, it was shown that Sapaṇ's own Indian teacher,

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[260] *Bka' 'bum*, text 36 and 38.

Śākyaśrībhadra, actually had taught a subitist meditation system that was very similar to the teaching of Gampopa. The correctness of this observation depends on the authenticity of the mentioned text by Śākyaśrībhadra. Given that this text is authentic, it is unlikely that Sapaṇ should have acquired his negative attitude towards Gampopa from Śākyaśrībhadra. Instead, we turned to the development of Buddhism in India during the beginning of the eleventh century to look for an origin. Sapaṇ could have been influenced by the teachers belonging to his own clan, who held the tantric teachings gathered by 'brog mi lotsa ba. I presented the hypothesis that 'brog mi gathered these teachings in India before the activity of the Indian master Maitrīpa, who worked towards an integration of Tantrism with conventional Mahāyāna philosophy. The tantric tradition initiated in Tibet by 'brog mi thus missed the beginning of this process of integration. The instructions received by Gampopa from mi la ras pa, however, contained the teachings of Maitrīpa, and Gampopa's doctrine can very well be seen as a further development of the integration begun by Maitrīpa. This is a possible explanation to the difference between Sapaṇ's and Gampopa's way of teaching.

This theory turns attention to Maitrīpa and his literary works, particularly the *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*. These works have also been treated briefly in this paper and Appendix B contains bibliographical references to these works. Here I merely pointed to the possible importance of Maitrīpa. Hopefully, future studies will provide a deeper understanding of his role. This should particularly be interesting in light of the many studies on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the teaching of which he is supposed to have revived.

This comparison between Gampopa and Sapaṇ thus lead to a threefold understanding. Firstly, it highlights the way in which Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine differs from classical Tantrism. Secondly, it shows the critical reaction to Gampopa's approach by certain elements within the Tibetan tradition. Thirdly, it adds an element to the understanding of the development of Tantrism in the eleventh century.

Finally, the last chapter provides a possible answer to why Gampopa had begun to teach Mahāmudrā outside a tantric context. By analyzing the conditions under which it arose, it was concluded that Gampopa thereby provided a solution to the prohibition on tantric sexual practices laid down by Atīśa. It was shown that the Tibetans were faced with two contradictory trends within the Indian Buddhism that they were trying to import. On the one hand, there was the monastic establishment with its culture of conventional Mahāyāna. On the other hand, there was the tantric subculture with its sexual techniques promising quick enlightenment that had developed outside the monasteries. Atīśa, who was an insider of the monastic establishment, had emphasized monkhood and put a lid on tantric practice. Gampopa's Mahāmudrā doctrine instead combined conventional Mahāyāna with Tantra, which in practical terms meant that it allowed tantric practice by celibate monks within the institution of the monastic establishment. The understanding of Gampopa's teaching thus offers a unique

view on how these two counter-cultures were united within the bka' brgyud tradition. With this in mind, we can start to understand how the conflict between monasticism and Tantra was solved in the other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Culture provides a structure for civilization to exist. This enables a society to function, but its regulations also impede innovation and development. Beneath the culture therefore exist various subcultures, where the limitations of the establishment are broken and visionary courage can unfold. It is thus an imperative for any culture not to suppress its subcultures but to let their inspiration affect the society. In Indian Buddhism, the monastic establishment sustained the Buddhist culture with its ethical rules and human ideals, while the tantric subculture added a fresh wind of vision and provocation. As the Tibetans imported Indian Buddhism, they were faced with the problem of letting these two trends find their proper places in the Tibetan society. Gampopa managed with his special brand of Mahāmudrā to unite the culture of Mahāyāna with the subculture of Tantra in a harmonious synthesis, where they provided support and inspiration for each other. Such a synthesis is very rare, and may teach us a valuable understanding for our own culture and subcultures.

Appendix A: Overview of the Works of Gampopa

(1) *rje sgam po pas mdzad pa'i te lo nā ro'i rnam thar* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 1-21),

(2) *rje mar pa dang rje btsun mi la'i rnam thar* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 23-42),

(3) *chos kyi rje dpal ldan sgam po pa chen po'i rnam par thar pa yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che khyab snyan pa'i ba dan thar pa rin po che'i rgyan gyi mchog* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 43-303).

(4) *tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 305-342),

(5) *mgon po zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i tshogs chos legs mdzes ma* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 343-487),

(6) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 489-547) (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 267-308),

(7) *tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 1-55) (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 309-348),

(8) *rje dwags po rin po che'i tshogs chos chen mo* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 57-121) (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 349-388).

(9) *rje dwags po'i zhal gdams dang/ rje sgom tshul gyi zhu lan* (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 1-33) (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, pp. 242-276),

(10) *dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan* (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 95-266) (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, pp. 71-241),

(11) *rje phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan* (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 43-94) (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, pp. 19-69),

(12) *rnal 'byor chos g.yung gi zhus lan* (*mdzod*, vol. kha, pp. 33-39) (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, pp. 277-284),

(13) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyus pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 123-161),

(14) *sems kyi mtshan nyid gab pa mngon du phyung ba* (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ca, pp. 1-18),

(15) *rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung dmar khrid gsang chen bar do'i dmar khrid 'pho ba'i dmar khrid zhal gdams dang bcas pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 163-228),

(16) *rje dwags po lha rjes mdzad pa'i phyag rgya chen po rdo rje ye shes dbang dang phag mo'i gzhung mdo dang bcas pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 229-249) (*mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 1-24),

(17) *rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung sgros/ snyan brgyud gsal ba'i me long* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 251-286)(*mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 24-54),

(18) *rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ snyan brgyud brjed byang ma* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 287-315) (*mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 54-81),

(19) *rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung zhal gyi bdud rtsi thun mong ma yin pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 317-385) (*mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 81-141),

(20) *phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag thog babs dang mgur 'bum rnams (mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 141-170),

(21) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po gsal byed kyi man ngag* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 387-405) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 179-184),

(22) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i sgom rim* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 407-439) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 184-209),

(23) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po'i 'bum tig* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 441-479) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 209-240),

(24) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba la ngo sprod pa zhes kyang bya snang ba lam khyer gyi rtog pa cig chog ces kyang bya phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma mi gyur ba ces kyang bya* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 2, pp. 481-509) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 240-263),

(25) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ snying po'i ngo sprod don dam gter mdzod* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 1-39) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 263-296),

(26) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ rnam rtog don dam gyi ngo sprod* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 41-75) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 296-327),

(27) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ sgrub pa snying gi ngo sprod* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 77-111) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 327-354),

(28) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ mdo sngags kyi sgom don bsdus pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 113-148) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 354-386),

(29) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung sgros du ma sgrigs pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 149-175) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 386-405),

(30) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bslab gsum rnam bzhag la sogs pa* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 177-245) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 405-463),

(31) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ gnas lugs gnyis kyi man ngag dang go cha gnyis kyi man ngag* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 247-343) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 463-566),

(32) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bka' tshems dang phyag rgya chen po lnga ldan/ lam mchog rin chen phreng ba/ chos bzhi mdor bsdus/ nyams lan mdor bsdus/ gnad kyi gzer gsang/ zhal gdams gsang mdzod ma/ dom bhi pa'i gtum mo/ 'khrul 'khor gyi gtum mo/ bar do'i gdams pa/ 'pho ba'i zhal gdams rnams* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 345-450) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 567-643),

(33) *chos rje dwags po lha rje'i gsung/ bstan bcos gros 'debs bdud rtsi 'phreng ba dang 'dre bzhi rtsad gcod* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 451-487) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 643-674),

(34) *zla 'od gzhon nus mdzad pa'i bcud bsdus* (*bka' 'bum*, vol. 3, pp. 489-523) *(mdzod*, vol. ka, pp. 674-703),

(35) *mar pa'i tshigs bcad brgyad ma'i 'grel gtam*,

(36) *zhal gdams lam mchog rin po che'i phreng ba* (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ka, pp. 481-515),

(37) *bstan bcos lung gi nyi 'od*,

(38) *dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan* (*rtsibs ri par ma*, vol. ka, pp. 33-479).

Appendix B: Indian Mahāmudrā Works

In this appendix, three main cycles of Indian Mahāmudrā works are listed: *grub pa sde bdun*, *snying po skor drug*, and *yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*. They are here listed in the order found in *mdzod*. There are, however, also a number of other Mahāmudrā works, particularly Dohās, that are not included in these cycles, and these works are thus not listed here.

Grub pa sde bdun

1) Skt. *Sakala tantra sambhava sañcodanī śrīguhya siddhi nāma*, Tib. *rgyud ma lus pa'i don dam pa'i don nges par skul bar byed pa dpal gsang ba grub pa*, by Padmavajra, trans. Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2217, Peking bstan 'ur no. 3061, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 31-101.

2) Skt. *Prajñopāya viniścaya siddhi*, Tib. *thabs dang shes rab rnam par gtan la dbab pa sgrub pa*, by Anaṅgavajra (Tib. yan lag med pa'i rdo rje), trans. Śāntibhadra and lotsa ba 'gos lhas btsas, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2218, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3062, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 101-123.

3) Skt. *Jñānasiddhi nāma sādhana*, Tib. *ye shes grub pa zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs*, by Indrabhūti, trans. Śraddhākaravarma and rin chen bzang po, and later revised by tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2219, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3063, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 123-189.

4) Skt. *Advayaiddhi sādhana nāma*, Tib. *gnyis su med par grub pa'i sgrub thabs*, by Lakṣmīṁkarā, trans. Śraddhākaravarma and rin chen bzang po, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2220, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3064, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 189-193.

5) Skt. *Śri uḍḍiyāna vinirgata guhya mahāguhya tattvopadeśa*, Tib. *dpal o rgyan nas byung ba gsang ba'i gsang ba chen po de kho na nyid kyi man ngag*, by Dārika, trans. Śāntibhadra and lotsa ba 'gos lhas btsas, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2221, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3065, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 193-196.

6) Skt. *Vyakta bhāvānugata tattva siddhi*, Tib. *dngos po gsal ba'i rjes su 'gro ba'i de kho na nyid grub pa*, by Sahajayoginī Cito, trans. Śāntibhadra and lotsa ba 'gos lhas btsas, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2222, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3066, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 196-210.

7) Skt. Śrī sahaja siddhi nāma, Tib. *dpal lhan cig skyes pa grub pa*, by Ḍombi Heruka, trans. dpa' bo rdo rje and 'brog mi lotsa ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2223, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3067, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 210-216.

Snying po skor drug

1) Skt. *Dohākoṣagīti*, Tib. *do ha mdzod kyi glu*, by Saraha, trans. Vajrapāṇi and lotsa ba rma ban chos 'bar, and later revised by 'brog mi jo sras and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2224, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3068, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 284-301.

2) Skt. *Caturmudrā niścaya*, Tib. *phyag rgya bzhi rjes su bstan pa*, by Nāgārjunagarbha, trans. Dhiriśrījñāna and rma ban chos 'bar, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2225, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3069, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 301-308.

3) Skt. unknown, Tib. *sems kyi sgrib pa rnam par sbyong ba zhes bya ba'i rab tu byed pa*, by Āryadeva, trans. unknown, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 1304?, Peking bstan 'gyur no. ?, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 308-322.

4) Skt. *Prajñājñanaprakāśa*, Tib. *shes rab ye shes gsal ba*, by Devacandra, trans. Vajrapāṇi and lotsa ba Dharmakīrti, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2226, Peking bstan 'gyur no.3070, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 322-358.

5) Skt. *Sthiti samuccaya*, Tib. *gnas pa bsdus pa*, by Sahajavajra, trans. Dhiriśrījñāna and rma ban chos 'bar, revised by bar ston, bla ma rgya gar ba, and mtshur lotsa ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2227, Peking bstan 'gyur 3071, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 358-378.

6) Skt. *Acintya kramopadeśa nāma*, Tib. *bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag*, by Kuddālīpāda (Tib. tog rtse ba), trans. Kṣemaṅkura (Tib. bde ba'i myu gu) and lotsa ba 'gos lhas btsas, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2228, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3072, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 378-392.

Yid La Mi Byed Pa'i Chos Skor, by Maitrīpa

1) Skt. *Kuḍṛṣti nirghāta nāma*, Tib. *lta ba ngan pa sel ba*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur ston ye shes 'byung gnas, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2229, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3073, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 392-408.

2) Skt. *Kuḍṛṣti nirghāta ṭīkā*, Tib. *lta ba ngan sel gyi dka' 'grel*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur ston Jñānākara, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2231, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3075, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 408-411.

3) Skt. *Yuganaddha prakāśa nāma*, Tib. *zung du 'jug pa rab tu gsal bar bstan pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, bstan 'gyur no. 2237, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3081, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 411-412.

4) Skt. *Dohānidhi nāma tattvopadeśa*, Tib. *do ha ti zhes bya ba de kho na nyid kyi man ngag*, trans. Dhiriśrījñāna, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2247, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3092, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 412-414.

5) Skt. *Prajñopāyakrīḍāpañcaka*, Tib. *thabs dang shes rab rtse pa lnga pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur ston Jñānākara, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2246, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3091, *mdzod*,

vol. Om, pp. 414-415.

6) Skt. *Aprasaha prakāśa nāma*, Tib. *rab tu mi gnas pa gsal bar bstan pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2235, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3079, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 415-417.

7) Skt. *Sahajaṣaṭka*, Tib. *lhan cig skyes pa drug pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur ston Jñānā kara, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2232, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3076, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 417-418.

8) Skt. *Madhyamaṣaṭka*, Tib. *dbu ma drug pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and nags tsho lotsa ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2230, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3074, *mdzod*, vol. Om, p. 418.

9) Skt. *Amanasikāroddeśa nāma*, Tib. *yid la mi byed pa ston pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and rma ban chos 'bar, revised by gnyan chung, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2249, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3094, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 419-423.

10) Skt. *Nirbheda pañcaka*, Tib. *mi phyed pa lnga pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and rma ban chos 'bar, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2238, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3083, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 423-424.

11) Skt. *Prīṇa pañcaka*, Tib. *dga' gcugs lnga pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur ston, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2237A, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3082, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 424-425.

12) Skt. *Māyānirukti nāma*, Tib. *sgyu ma nges par bstan pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2234, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3078, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 425-427.

13) Skt. *Svapnanirdeśa*, Tib. *rmi lam nges par bstan pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2233, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3077, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 427-428.

14) Skt. *Tattvadaśaka nāma*, Tib. *de kho na nyid bcu pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2236, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3080, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 428-430.

15) Skt. *Mahāsukha prakāśa*, Tib. *bde ba chen po gsal ba*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and rma ban, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2239, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3084, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 430-432.

16) Skt. *Tattvaratnāvalī nāma*, Tib. *de kho na nyid rin po che'i phreng ba*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2240, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3085, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 432-446.

17) Skt. *Tattvaprakāśa nāma*, Tib. *de kho na nyid rab tu bstan pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2241, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3086, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 446-448.

18) Skt. *Tathāgatapañcamudra vivaraṇa*, Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa lnga'i phyag rgya rnam par*

bshad pa, trans. Vajrapāṇi and rma ban chos 'bar, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2242, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3087, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 448-454.

19) Skt. *Sekakārya saṁgraha*, Tib. *dbang gi dgos pa mdor bsdus pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2243, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3088, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 454-462.

20) Skt. *Saṁkṣiptaseka prakriyā*, Tib. *dbang gi bya ba mdor bsdus pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur Jñānākara, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2244, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3089, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 462-491.

21) Skt. *Pañcasvabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin lnga pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur Jñānākara, revised by Amṛtadeva, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2245, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3090, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 491-497.

22) Skt. *Mahāyānaviniśati*, Tib. *theg pa chen po nyi shu pa*, trans. Vajrapāṇi and mtshur Jñā nākara, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2248, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3093, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 497-500.

23) Skt. *Tattvamahāyāna vimśati*, Tib. *de kho na nyid theg pa chen po nyi shu pa*, trans. Dhiriśrījñāna and lotsa ba seng dkar śa kya 'od, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2250, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3095, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 500-502.

24) Skt. *Sekanirdeśa nāma*, Tib. *dbang bskur ba nges par bstan pa*, trans. Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita and tshul khrims rgyal ba, sde dge bstan 'gyur no. 2252, Peking bstan 'gyur no. 3097, *mdzod*, vol. Om, pp. 502-507.

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